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THE WALLET OF TIME

VOLUME TWO



"The best in this kind are but shadows"

—A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

MARY ANDERSON

ADA REHAN

JULIA MARLOWE

VIOLA ALLEN

BLANCHE BATES

MRS. FISKE

AUGUSTUS THOMAS

MRS. CARTER

E. H. SOTHERN

DAVID WARFIELD

JOHN MASON

MRS. CAMPBELL

MAUDE ADAMS

THE WALLET OF TIME

CONTAINING PERSONAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, AND
CRITICAL REMINISCENCE OF THE
AMERICAN THEATRE

BY
WILLIAM WINTER

"Now name the rest of the Players."

—SHAKESPEARE

VOLUME TWO

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NEW YORK
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1913

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I.

MARY ANDERSON.

1859—19—.

ON November 25, 1875, an audience was assembled in one of the theatres of Louisville, Kentucky, to see "the first appearance upon any stage" of "a young lady of Louisville," who was announced to play Shakespeare's *Juliet*. That young lady was in fact a girl, in her sixteenth year, who had never received any practical stage training, whose education had been comprised in five years of ordinary schooling, whose observation of life had never extended beyond the narrow limits of a provincial city, who was undeveloped, unheralded, unknown, and poor, and whose only qualifications for the task she had set herself to accomplish were the impulse of genius and the force of commanding character. She dashed at the work with all the vigor of abounding and enthusiastic youth and with all the audacity of complete inexperience. A rougher performance of *Juliet*, probably, was never seen, but through all the disproportion and turbulence of that effort the authentic charm of a beautiful nature was distinctly revealed. The sweetness, sincerity, force,

exceptional superiority, and singular charm of that nature could not be mistaken. The uncommon stature and sumptuous physical beauty of the girl were obvious. Above all, her magnificent voice,—copious, melodious, penetrating, loud and clear, yet smooth and gentle,—delighted every ear and touched every heart. The impersonation of *Juliet* was not highly esteemed by judicious hearers, but some persons who saw that performance felt and said that a new actress had risen and that a great career had begun. Those prophetic voices were right. That “young lady of Louisville” was Mary Anderson.

It is seldom in Stage history that the biographer comes upon such a character as that of Mary Anderson, or is privileged to muse over the story of such a career as she has had. In many cases the narrative of the life of an actress is a narrative of talents perverted, of opportunity misused, of failure, misfortune, and suffering. For one story like that of Mrs. Siddons there are many like that of Mrs. Robinson. For one name like that of Charlotte Cushman or that of Helena Faucit there are many like that of Lucille Western or that of Matilda Heron,—daughters of sorrow and victims of trouble. The mind lingers, accordingly, impressed and pleased by a sense of personal worth as well as of genius and beauty, on the record of a representative American actress, as noble as she was brilliant and as lovely in her private life as she was

beautiful, fortunate, and renowned in her public pursuits.

Mary Anderson, a native of California, was born at Sacramento, July 28, 1859. Her father, Charles Joseph Anderson, who died in 1863, aged twenty-nine, and was buried in Magnolia cemetery, Mobile, Alabama, was an officer in the service of the Southern Confederacy at the time of his death, and he is said to have been a handsome, dashing person. Her mother, Marie Antoinette Leugers, was a native of Philadelphia. Her earlier years were passed in Louisville, whither she was taken in 1860, and she was there taught in a Roman Catholic school and reared in the Roman Catholic faith, under the guidance of a Franciscan priest, Anthony Miller, her mother's uncle. She left school before she was fourteen years old and she went on the stage two years later. She had while a child seen various theatrical performances, notably those given by Edwin Adams and Edwin Booth, and her mind had been strongly drawn toward the Stage, under the influence of those sights. The dramatic characters that she first studied were male characters—those of *Hamlet*, *Cardinal Wolsey*, *Richelieu*, and *King Richard the Third*,—and to those she added Schiller's *Joan of Arc*. She studied those parts privately, and she knew them all and knew them well. Professor Noble Butler, of Louisville, gave her instruction in English literature and elocution, and in 1874, at Cincinnati, Charlotte Cushman said a few

encouraging words to her, and told her to persevere in following the Stage, and to "begin at the top." George Vandenhoff gave her a few lessons before she came out, and then followed her début as *Juliet*, leading to her first regular engagement, which began at Barney Macaulay's Theatre, Louisville, January 20, 1876. From that time onward for thirteen years she was an actress,—never in a stock company but always as a star,—and her name became famous in Great Britain as well as America. She had eight seasons of steadily increasing prosperity on the American Stage before she went abroad to act. She filled three seasons at the Lyceum Theatre, London,—from September 1, 1883, to April 5, 1884; from November 1, 1884, to April 25, 1885, and from September 10, 1887, to March 24, 1888,—and her success there surpassed in profit that of any American actor who had appeared in England. She revived "Romeo and Juliet" with much splendor at the London Lyceum on November 1, 1884, and she restored "The Winter's Tale" to the Stage at Nottingham, April 23, 1887; in London,—where she carried it through a season,—on September 10. She made several prosperous tours of the English provincial cities and established herself as a favorite actress in fastidious Edinburgh, critical Manchester, and impulsive but exacting Dublin. The repertory with which she gained fame and fortune included *Juliet*, *Hermione*, *Perdita*, *Rosalind*, *Julia*, *Bianca*, *Evadne*, *Parthenia*, *Pauline*, *The*

Countess, Galatea, Clarice, Ion, Meg Merrilies, Berthe, and the *Duchess de Torrenueva*. She incidentally acted a few other parts, *Desdemona* being one of them, and she acted *Lady Macbeth* in the Sleep Walking Scene. Her distinctive achievements were in Shakespearean drama. She studied and prepared two plays by Tennyson, "The Cup" and "The Falcon," but never produced them. This record signifies the resources of mind, the personal charm, the exalted spirit, and the patient, wisely directed, and strenuous zeal that sustained her achievements and justified her success.

Aspirants in the field of art are continually coming to the surface. In poetry, painting, sculpture, and music, and in acting,—which involves and utilizes those other arts,—the line of beginners is endless. Constantly, as the seasons roll by, those essayists emerge, and almost as constantly, after a little time, they disappear. The process is sequent upon an obvious law of spiritual life,—that all minds which are conscious of the art impulse must at least make an effort toward expression, but that no mind can succeed in the effort unless, in addition to the art impulse, it possesses also the art faculty. For expression is a dominant necessity of human nature. Out of this proceed forms and influences of beauty. These react upon mankind, pleasing an instinct for the beautiful, and developing the faculty of taste. Other and finer forms and influences of beauty ensue, civilization is advanced, and thus finally the way is opened

toward that condition of immortal spiritual happiness which this process of experience prefigures and prophesies. But the art faculty is of rare occurrence. At long intervals there is a break in the usual experience of Stage failure, and some person hitherto unknown not only takes the field but keeps it. When Garrick came out, as the *Duke of Glo'ster*, in the autumn of 1741, in London, he had never been heard of, but within a brief time he was famous. "He at once decided the public taste," said Macklin; and Pope summed up the victory in the well-known sentence, "That young man never had an equal, and will never have a rival." Tennyson's line furnishes the apt and comprehensive comment—"The many fail, the one succeeds." Mary Anderson in her day furnished the most conspicuous and striking example, aside from that of Adelaide Neilson, to which it is possible to refer of this exceptional experience. And yet, even after years of trial and test, it is doubtful whether the excellence of that remarkable actress was entirely comprehended in her own country. The provincial custom of waiting for foreign authorities to discover our royal minds is one from which many inhabitants of America have not yet escaped. As an actress, indeed, Mary Anderson was, probably, more popular than any player on the American Stage excepting Edwin Booth or Joseph Jefferson; but there is a difference between popularity and just

and comprehensive intellectual recognition. Many actors receive the one; few receive the other.

Much of the contemporary criticism that is lavished on actors in this exigent period,—so bountifully supplied with critical observations, so poorly furnished with creative art,—touches only on the surface. Acting is measured with a tape, and the chief demand seems to be for form. This is right, and indeed is imperative, whenever it is certain that the actor, at the best, is one who never can rise above the high-water mark of correct mechanism. There are cases that need a deeper method of inquiry and a more searching glance. A wise critic, when this emergency comes, is something more than an expert who gives an opinion upon a professional exploit. The special piece of work may contain technical flaws, and yet there may be within it a soul worth all the “icily regular and splendidly null” achievements that ever were possible to proficient mediocrity. That soul is visible only to the observer who can look through the art into the interior spirit of the artist, and thus can estimate a piece of acting according to its inspirational drift and the enthralling and ennobling personality out of which it springs. The acting of Mary Anderson, from the first moment of her career, was of the kind that requires that deep insight and broad judgment,—aiming to recognize and rightly estimate its worth. Yet few performers of the day were as liberally favored as she was with the

monitions of dulness and the ponderous patronage of self-complacent folly.

Conventional judgment as to Mary Anderson's acting expressed itself in one statement—"she is cold." There could not be a greater error. That quality in her acting,—a reflex from her spiritual nature,—which produced on the conventional mind the effect of coldness was, in fact, distinction, the attribute of being exceptional. The judgment that she was cold was a resentful judgment, and was given in a spirit of detraction. It proceeded from an order of mind that can never be content with the existence of anything above its own level. "He hath," says *Iago*, speaking of *Cassio*, "a daily beauty in his life, that makes me ugly." Those detractors did not understand themselves as well as the wily Italian understood himself, and they did not state their attitude with such precision; in fact, they did not state it at all, for it was unconscious with them and involuntary. They saw a being unlike themselves, they vaguely apprehended the presence of a superior nature, and that they resented. A favorite popular notion is that all persons are born free and equal,—which is false. Free and equal they all are (theoretically!) in the eye of the law; but every person is born subject to heredity and circumstance, and the individual who will investigate the subject will perceive that no one has been able to escape the compelling and constraining force of character,—which is fate.



From a Photograph by Mora.

In the Collection of the Author.

MARY ANDERSON.

All persons, moreover, are unequal. To one human being is given genius; to another, beauty; to another, strength; to another, exceptional judgment; to another, exceptional memory; to another, grace and charm; to still another, physical ugliness and spiritual obliquity, moral taint, and disabling weakness. To the majority of persons Nature imparts mediocrity, and it is from mediocrity that the derogatory denial emanates as to the superior men and women of our race. A woman of the average kind is not difficult to comprehend. There is nothing distinctive about her. She is fond of admiration; rather readily censorious of other women; charitable toward male rakes; and partial to fine attire. The poet Wordsworth's formula, "Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles," comprises all that is essential for her existence, and that bard has himself precisely described her, in a grandfatherly and excruciating couplet,

as

"A creature not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food."

Women of that sort are not called "cold." The standard is ordinary and it is understood. But when a woman appears on the stage whose life is not ruled by the love of admiration, whose nature is devoid of vanity, who looks with indifference upon adulation, whose head is not turned by renown, whose composure is not disturbed by flattery, whose simplicity is not marred by

wealth, who does not go into theatrical hysterics and offer that condition of artificial delirium as the mood of genius in acting, who above all makes it apparent, in her personality and her achievements, that the soul can be sufficient to itself and can exist without taking on a burden of the fever or dulness of other lives, there is a flutter of vague discontent among the mystified rank and file, and she is called "cold." That is what happened in the case of Mary Anderson.

What are the faculties and attributes essential to great success in acting? A sumptuous and supple figure, that can realize the ideals of statuary; a mobile countenance, that can strongly and unerringly express the feelings of the heart and the workings of the mind; eyes that can awe with the majesty or startle with the terror or thrill with the tenderness of their soul-subduing gaze; a voice, deep, clear, resonant, flexible, that can range over the wide compass of emotion and carry its meaning in varying music to every ear and every heart; intellect to shape the purposes and control the means of mimetic art; deep knowledge of human nature; delicate intuitions; the skill to listen as well as the art to speak; imagination to grasp the ideal of a character in all its conditions of experience; the instinct of the sculptor to give it form, of the painter to give it color, and of the poet to give it movement; and, back of all, the temperament of genius,—the genialized nervous system,—to impart to the whole artistic struct-

ure the thrill of spiritual vitality. Mary Anderson's acting revealed those faculties and attributes, and those observers who realized the poetic spirit, the moral majesty, and the isolation of mind that she continually suggested felt that she was an extraordinary woman. Such moments in her acting as that of *Galatea's* mute supplication, at the last of earthly life, that of *Juliet's* desolation, after the final midnight parting with the last human creature whom she may ever behold, and that of *Hermione's* despair, when she covers her face and falls as if stricken dead, were the eloquent denotements of power, and in those moments and such as those, —with which her art abounded,—was the fulfilment of every hope that her acting inspired and the vindication of every encomium that it received.

Early in her professional career, when considering her acting, I quoted, as applicable to her, those lovely lines by Wordsworth:—

“The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.”

In the direction of development thus indicated she steadily advanced. Her affiliations were with grandeur, purity, and loveliness. An inherent and passionate

ing had been accomplished. He was only twenty-seven when he first touched that subject, and, although he returned to it in later years, his work was not wholly relieved of a florid strain, an artificial use of rhymed lines, and a somewhat sketch-like treatment of character,—which are indications of immaturity. “*Romeo and Juliet*” is a powerful, eloquent exposition of passion and misery, but, somewhat unlike the greater tragedies of Shakespeare’s maturity, it does not entirely and profoundly display the character through the emotion. When he came to depict *Lady Macbeth* and *Cleopatra* he could show human passions inextricably blended with the diversified attributes of definite human personality. He did not do that with *Juliet*. If that afflicted woman is separated from her passion and her misery, she fades almost into the realm of conjecture. When first presented she is beautiful, sweet, innocent, artless, obedient; her heart has not been awakened, and her mind and will, contented in the physical joy of blooming, youthful life, are pleased and passive. Throughout her first scene, which is not a short one, she speaks only about fifty words. It is not till her eyes have looked into the eyes of *Romeo* and her heart has leaped to his that she becomes a woman and begins to reveal in her words and conduct the attributes of her individual nature. Yet even then there remains need for the actress of *Juliet* to reinforce the character with her personality.

Mary Anderson fulfilled that opportune condition. By the affluence of her nature, by the extraordinary correspondence existing between herself and the Shakespearean ideal, and by beautiful art,—through which her impetuous feeling was guided by firm purpose and made the more affecting by repose,—she imparted to *Juliet* an individual life of delightful character as well as a tempest of emotion and the desolate grandeur of a tragic death. Her performance was right in stage convention, magnetic and noble in loveliness of spirit, touched with the glamour of woful passion, and fraught with tremendous energy of purpose. In the scenes with *Romeo* she made *Juliet* tender and simple. The love that she denoted was not the animal love which devours and destroys,—that sensual frenzy which so much of contemporary criticism has declared to be the only genuine emotion,—but the love that hallows, cherishes, and would sacrifice life itself to promote the happiness of its object. Her desolation in that supreme moment when, after the last parting with the *Nurse*, the poor, doomed girl enters into her bleak and tragic solitude was instinct with pathos. Her frenzy in the climax of the Potion Scene and her recklessness of passionate misery in the suicide were thrilling and piteous. The first entrance of *Juliet*, putting aside the curtain and standing in a stairway arch, was the natural disclosure of the simple maid, amid her accustomed domestic surroundings. That felicity of grace in the treatment

predominant theme of that play, as it afterward was of "Hamlet" and kindred works. This world is not a rose garden, and happiness is not the earthly destiny of man. The great men and women in Shakespeare are those that the common mind would invariably regard as failures. *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon*,—they all drift into ruin. *Romeo* fails,—not only because fate is against him but because of a perverse, melancholy, ingrained, enervating dejection which taints his spirit and would inevitably defeat his life. *Juliet*, thrilled and absorbed by passionate idolatry of another human being, overwhelmed with emotion that recks no reason and brooks no restraint, is the personification of heedless love, and therefore is fatal to herself. The glittering *Mercutio*, the choleric, gallant *Tybalt*, the gentle *Paris*, the gay, amiable *Benvolio*, all perish in their youthful prime. *Romeo's* mother dies of a broken heart. All through the woof of life runs a thread of perversion and calamity: but at the basis of *Juliet's* personality and experience, equally with those of *Romeo*, there is a deeper and darker truth,—a preordination of evil which is to spring from the sovereign emotion of humanity. All great passion isolates the heart by which it is possessed. Certain natures are born to sorrow, and the impending calamity of a malignant fate darkens with sombre presentiment even their dawn of life, and sequesters them, in a mournful strangeness, from their fellow-

creatures of the earth. The keynote is sounded by *Juliet* the moment her heart awakens: "Too early seen unknown, and known too late." The same presentiment has already settled upon the soul of *Romeo*: "My mind misgives some consequence yet hanging in the stars." Miss Anderson grasped the subject in that spirit and developed *Juliet* under an inexorable light of truth.

"AS YOU LIKE IT."

A production of "As You Like It" should liberate the spectator from that tyranny of the commonplace which is the usual condition of human existence and lure him into a land of dreams and fancies "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." But that play is so saturated with the evanescent quality of poetry that a presentation entirely accordant with its spirit is, perhaps, impracticable. The work seems simple, and it ought to be easy to define and convey its charm; yet something subtle at the heart of it eludes the analytic touch. While, however, the nature of its power remains mysterious, there can be no doubt of the nature of its influence. It transfigures common life, and it swathes every object and thought in a golden haze of romance. Drifted on its current, the imagination floats away, like the wild flower on the autumn brook, in aimless, indolent happiness. It is essentially a play to be enjoyed, and the right acting of it requires that the players, having tested and justified their plan,

“Man’s love,” said Byron, “is of man’s life a thing apart—’tis woman’s whole existence.” Shakespeare had entertained a kindred thought. His men who actually love,—not like *King Henry the Fifth* or *Benedick* but like *Romeo* and *Othello*,—are men who have something of the woman in them, while most of his comedy women would be nothing if they were not lovers. Each of them loves, and each of them shows a different nature under the stress of the sovereign passion. *Viola*, hopeless and patient, will let concealment prey upon her life. *Helena*, made of stronger fibre, will palter with unchastity to win her happiness in love’s fulfilment. *Juliet* will have love or death, and she is never so happy or so great as when she plunges the dagger into her heart. *Imogen* will bare her fond bosom to every storm of hardship and cruelty, exultant in simple fidelity and adoration. *Rosalind* also loves, and she would be true; but she would do no desperate deed, and she would come at last to live in the mind more than in the heart: her resources of character are not less strong than brilliant: but *Rosalind* was born for victory, and when she wishes to conquer Love she will be so enchanting that all the perfumed airs around her beauteous head will stir and whisper with the rustle of his coming wings. To act *Rosalind* rightly is to assume that condition in Shakespeare’s play.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, signing his superb portrait of Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse, wrote his name on the

hem of her garment. It is often in the light and delicate touches that an actor discloses the keen faculty of perception, the gentle and right feeling, and the unerring instinct of taste which are such admirable and charming attributes. Miss Anderson lavished on her performance of *Rosalind* a scrupulous care as to detail and finish, and especially she expressed the noble pride and the shrinking, sensitive modesty of a true woman who truly loves. "My pride fell with my fortunes" is not a truth about *Rosalind*, it is only an excuse. She is as proud as she is tender, and the love with which she honors and hallows *Orlando*, though ardent and generous, is dominated by a strong character, active morality, and fine intellect. In Miss Anderson's impersonation the quality of the character, like the fragrance of the rose, surrounded it and explained it. Her *Rosalind* had not put on male attire as one of Molière's heroines might have done, for an intrigue or a frolic, but as a disguise beneath which she might protect her changed and menaced state, and, perhaps, retrieve her fallen fortune; and once being in disguise she would make use of her opportunity to test the depth and sincerity of the love in which her great, pure, tender heart both trembles and exults. Miss Anderson struck the keynote of her impersonation and disclosed a subtle perception of transparency in acting,—the device that lets the deep feeling of the heart glimmer through the veil of an assumed mood,—when in saying to *Orlando*

"Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown more than your enemies" she made the last words a speech "aside." The sweet woman nature thus denoted is at the heart of Shakespeare's ideal. Miss Anderson's *Rosalind* was neither a rake nor a hoyden nor was it suggestive of an insipid prude; it was a noble, brilliant, pure, lovely woman, glorious in the affluent vitality of her beautiful youth and enchanting in the healthful, sparkling freedom of a bright mind and a happy heart.

The vague stirring of love in the heart of *Rosalind*, which she does not understand; the unrestful mood, the sadness which is due to her regretful perception of her unfortunate circumstances, the show of mirth which would be natural under happy conditions, but which now is a little forced; the abundant, healthful vitality, the finely poised mind, the tenderness, the sweetly grave temperament, the royal superiority, which yet is touched with a submissive meekness,—those attributes were crystallized into a lovely image of blooming womanhood. The *Princess* has been but slightly mentioned before she enters; in the acting version she commonly is not mentioned at all. Her coming, therefore, is a little abrupt. Miss Anderson did not fail to evince her consciousness that every character has its background of previous life. Her entrance as *Rosalind* was in the continuance of a condition, not the beginning of it. The change from pensive preoccupation to arch

levity told at once its story of sorrow sweetly veiled and of a deep nature beneath the smile. The troubled wonder in the backward look at *Orlando* was eloquent equally of purity and latent passion. Nothing could be more expressive of *Rosalind's* ardor and delicacy than Miss Anderson's graceful action with the chain. The fine burst of filial resentment, suddenly curbed by the solicitude of friendship, when *Rosalind* defends her banished father, had its legitimate effect of power. In the boy's dress it was shown that a royal nature never ceases to be royal. Through the forest scenes with *Orlando* Miss Anderson made *Rosalind* repress beneath frolic and banter the passion that longs to speak. The furtive caress was indicative of the spirit. In the reproof of *Phæbe* the almost jocular mirth was equally natural. The pathos in the Swoon Scene sprang out of the under-tide of earnestness that had preceded it. The final entrance of the *Princess*, in her bridal garments of spotless white, presented an image of dazzling loveliness. Miss Anderson closed the piece with a dance. The foes were reconciled; the lovers were mated; and while the woods were ringing with music and every face was shining with happiness, the curtain fell on a scene of sylvan beauty and "true delights."

The quality that most commended the actress to sympathy and admiration was her spiritual freedom. Care had not laid its leaden hand upon her heart. Grief had not stained the whiteness of her spirit. The galling

fetters of convention had not crippled her life. Accumulated burdens of error and folly had not deadened her enthusiasm and embittered her mind. Disappointment had not withered for her the bloom of ambition or blighted the smile on the face of hope. Time, with its insidious and saddening touch, had not for her curbed the starry visions of purpose or the joyous tumult of action. Satiety and monotony had not made a desert round her path. For her the birds of morning were singing in the summer woods, while her footsteps fell not on the faded leaves of loss and sorrow, but on the blown roses of youth and joy. Strong in noble and serene womanhood, untouched by either the evil or the dulness of contiguous lives, not secure through penury of feeling yet not imperilled through reckless drift of emotion, rich equally in mental gifts and physical equipments, she seemed the living fulfilment of the old poetic ideal of gypsy freedom and classic grace that Byron saw in his "Egeria" and Wordsworth in his "Phantom of Delight." Once, at the outset, comes to every human soul the opportunity of its choice. Every emanation of Miss Anderson's art was eloquent of innate superiority. Whatever its pathway might be, such a nature would keep imperial dominance equally of its circumstances and itself. The success of the actress was not the accident of beauty or caprice. Her art was noble, but her mind was more noble than her art, and the presence of such a woman must have

touched, in many a heart, the chord of sorrow which vibrates back to that error—the surrender of innocence to sin—which lost the world. Each of her performances gave its special revelation and imparted its peculiar charm; but, higher and better than her works, because a monition to the soul and not merely a delight to the sense, was the woman behind the actress,—showing ever what loveliness is possible in human life and what nobleness can yet remain among the wastes of experience and the wrecks of time.

“THE WINTER’S TALE.”

There is so much beauty in the comedy of “The Winter’s Tale,”—so much thought, character, humor, philosophy, sweetly serene feeling and loveliness of poetic language,—that the public ought to feel obliged to any one who successfully restores it to the Stage, from which it usually is banished. The piece was written in the maturity of Shakespeare’s marvellous powers, and indeed some good Shakespearean scholars believe it to be the last work that fell from his hand. Human life as depicted in “The Winter’s Tale” shows itself like what it always seems to be, in the eyes of patient, tolerant, magnanimous experience,—the eyes “that have kept watch o’er man’s mortality,”—for it is a scene of inexplicable contrasts and vicissitudes, seemingly a chaos of caprice and chance, yet always, in fact, beneficently overruled and guided to good ends. Human beings

are shown in it as full of weakness; often as the puppets of laws that they do not understand and of universal propensities and impulses into which they never pause to inquire; almost always as objects of benignant pity. The woful tangle of human existence is here viewed with half-cheerful, half-sad tolerance, yet with the hope and belief that all will come right at last. The mood of the comedy is pensive but radically sweet.

Mary Anderson doubled the characters of *Hermione* and *Perdita*. This had not been conspicuously done until it was done by her, and her innovation in that respect was met with disapproval. The moment the subject is examined, however, objection to that method of procedure is dispelled. *Hermione*, as a dramatic person, disappears in the middle of the Third Act of the comedy and comes no more until the end, when she emerges as a statue. Her character has been entirely expressed and her part in the action of the drama has been substantially fulfilled before she disappears. There is no intermediate passion to be wrought to a climax, nor is there any intermediate mood, dramatically speaking, to be sustained. The dramatic necessities are vastly unlike, for example, those of *Lady Macbeth*,—one of the hardest of all parts to play well, because exhibited intermittently, at intervals, yet steadily constrained by the necessity of cumulative excitement. The representative of *Lady Macbeth* must be identified with that character, whether on the stage or off, from



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Juliet, in "Romeo and Juliet."



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MARY ANDERSON
as

Rosalind, in "As You Like It."

the beginning of it to the end. *Hermione*, on the contrary, is at rest from the moment when she faints, on receiving information of the death of her boy. A lapse of sixteen years is assumed, and then, revealed as a statue, she personifies majestic virtue and victorious fortitude. When she descends from the pedestal she silently embraces *Leontes*, speaks a few pious, maternal and tranquil lines (there are precisely seven of them in the original, but Mary Anderson added two, selected from "All's Well"), and embraces *Perdita*, whom she has not seen since the girl's earliest infancy. This is their only meeting, and little is sacrificed by the use of a substitute for the daughter in that scene. *Perdita's* brief apostrophe to the statue must be omitted, but it is not missed in the representation. The resemblance between mother and daughter heightens the effect of illusion, in its impress equally upon fancy and vision. It was a judicious and felicitous choice that the actress made when she selected those two characters, and the fact that her impersonation of them carried a practically disused Shakespearean comedy through a season of 166 consecutive nights at the Lyceum Theatre in London furnished an indorsement alike of her wisdom and her ability. She played in a stage version of the piece, in five acts, containing thirteen scenes, arranged by herself.

While Mary Anderson was acting those two parts in London the sum of critical opinion seemed to be that

her performance of *Perdita* was better than her performance of *Hermione*; but beneath that judgment there was, apparently, the impression that *Hermione* is a character fraught with superlatively great passions, powers, and qualities, such as can be apprehended only by colossal sagacity and conveyed by herculean talents and skill. Those vast attributes were not specified, but there was a mysterious intimation of their existence,—as of something vague, formidable, and mostly elusive. But in truth *Hermione*, although a stronger part than *Perdita*, is neither complex, dubious, nor inaccessible; and Mary Anderson, although more fascinating in *Perdita*, could and did rise, in *Hermione*, to a noble height of tragic power,—an excellence not possible, either for her or for anybody, in the more juvenile and slender character.

Hermione has usually been represented as an elderly woman and by such an actress as is technically called “heavy.” She ought to be represented as about thirty years of age at the beginning of the piece and forty-six at the end of it. *Leontes* is not more than thirty-four at the opening, and he would be fifty at the close. He speaks, in his first scene, of his boyhood as only twenty-three years gone, when his dagger was worn “muzzled, lest it should bite its master,”—at which time he may have been ten years old; certainly not more, probably less. His words, toward the end of Act Third, “so sure as this beard’s gray,” refer to the beard of

Antigonus, not to his own. He is a young man when the play begins, and *Polixenes* is about the same age, and *Hermione* is a young woman. *Antigonus* and *Paulina* are middle-aged persons in the earlier scenes and *Paulina* is an elderly woman in the Statue Scene,—almost an old woman, though not too old to be given in marriage to old *Camillo*, the ever-faithful friend. In Mary Anderson's presentation of "The Winter's Tale" those details received thoughtful consideration and correct treatment.

In *Hermione* is seen a type of the celestial nature in woman,—a nature combining infinite love, charity, and patience. Such a nature is rare; but it is possible, it exists, and Shakespeare, who depicted everything, did not omit to portray that. To comprehend *Hermione* the observer must separate her, absolutely and finally, from association with the passions. Mrs. Jame-son acutely and justly describes her character as exhibiting "dignity without pride, love without passion, and tenderness without weakness." That is exactly true. *Hermione* was not easily won, and the best thing known about *Leontes* is that at last she came to love him and that her love for him survived his cruel and wicked treatment, chastened him, reinstated him, and ultimately blessed him. *Hermione* suffers the utmost affliction that a good woman can suffer. Her boy dies, heart-broken, at the news of his mother's alleged disgrace. Her infant daughter is torn from her breast

and cast forth to perish. Her husband becomes her enemy and persecutor. Her chastity is assailed and vilified. She is subjected to the bitter indignity of a public trial. It is no wonder that at last her brain reels and she falls as if stricken dead. The apparent anomaly is her survival for sixteen years, in lonely seclusion, and her emergence, after that, as anything but a forlorn shadow of her former self. The poet Shelley recorded the truth that all great emotions either kill themselves or kill those who feel them. It is here, however, that the exceptional temperament of *Hermione* supplies an explanatory and needed qualification. Her emotions are never of a passionate kind. Her mind predominates. Her life is in the affections and therefore it is rational. She sees clearly the facts of her experience and condition, and she knows exactly how those facts appear to the eyes of others. She is one of those persons who possess a keen and just prescience of events, who can look far into the future and discern those resultant consequences of the present which, under the operation of inexorable moral law, must inevitably ensue. Self-poised in the right and free from the disturbing force of impulse and desire, she can await the justice of time, she can live, and she can live in the tranquil patience of resignation. True majesty of the person is dependent on repose of the soul, and there can be no repose of the soul without moral rectitude and a far-reaching, comprehensive, wise vision of events.

Mary Anderson embodied *Hermione* in accordance with that ideal. By the expression of her face and the tones of her voice, in a single speech, the actress placed beyond question her grasp of the character:—

“Good my lords,
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex
Commonly are—the want of which vain dew
Perchance shall dry your pities—but I have
That honorable grief lodged here, which burns
Worse than tears drown.”

The conspicuous, predominant, convincing, artistic beauty in her impersonation of *Hermione* was her realization of the part, in figure, face, presence, demeanor, and temperament. She did not afflict her auditor with the painful sense of a person struggling upward toward an unattainable identity. She made the auditor conscious of the presence of a queen. This, obviously, is the main thing—that the individuality shall be imperial, not merely wearing royal attire but being invested with the royal authenticity of divine endowment and consecration. Much emphasis has been placed by Shakespeare on that attribute of innate grandeur. *Leontes*, at the opening of the Trial Scene, describes his accused wife as “the daughter of a king,” and in the same scene her father is mentioned as the *Emperor of Russia*. The gentleman who, in Act Fifth, recounts to *Autolycus* the meeting between *Leontes* and his daugh-

ter *Perdita* especially notes "the majesty of the creature, in resemblance of the mother." *Hermione* herself, in the course of her vindication—expressed in one of the most noble and pathetic strains of poetical eloquence in our language—names herself "a great king's daughter," therein recalling those august and piteous words of Shakespeare's *Queen Katharine*:

"We were a queen, or long have thought so; certain
The daughter of a king."

Poor old *Antigonus*, in his final soliloquy, recounting the vision of *Hermione* that had come upon him in the night, declares her to be a woman royal and grand not by descent only but by nature:—

"I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,
So filled and so becoming. In pure white robes
Like very sanctity, she did approach."

That image Mary Anderson embodied, and therefore the ideal of Shakespeare was made a living thing,—that glorious ideal, in shaping which the great poet "from all that are took something good, to make a perfect woman." Toward *Polixenes*, in the first scene, her manner was wholly gracious, delicately playful, innocently kind, and purely frank. Her quiet archness at the question, "Will you go yet?" struck exactly the right key of *Hermione's* mood. With the baby prince *Mamillius* her frolic and

banter, affectionate, free, and gay, were in a happy vein of feeling and humor. Her simple dignity, restraining both resentment and grief, in face of the injurious reproaches of *Leontes*, was entirely noble and right, and the pathetic words, "I never wished to see you sorry, now I trust I shall," could not have been spoken with more depth and intensity of grieved affection than were felt in her composed yet tremulous voice. The entrance, at the Trial Scene, was made with the stateliness natural to a queenly woman, and yet with a touch of pathos—the cold patience of despair. The delivery of *Hermione's* defensive speeches was profoundly earnest and touching. The simple cry of the mother's breaking heart and the action of veiling her face and falling like one dead, at the announcement of the *Prince's* death, were perfect denotements of the collapse of a grief-stricken woman. The skill with which the actress, in the Statue Scene,—which is all repose and no movement,—contrived nevertheless to invest *Hermione* with steady vitality and to imbue the crisis with a feverish air of suspense was in a high degree significant of the personality of genius. For such a performance of *Hermione* Shakespeare himself has provided the sufficient summary and encomium:—

"Women will love her, that she is a woman
More worth than any man; men that she is
The rarest of all women."

It is one thing to say that Mary Anderson was better in *Perdita* than in *Hermione*, and another thing to say that the performance of *Perdita* was preferred. Everybody preferred it,—even those who knew that it was not the better of the two; for everybody loves the sunshine more than the shade. *Hermione* means grief and endurance. *Perdita* means beautiful youth and happy love. It does not take long for an observer to choose between them. Suffering is not companionable. By her impersonation of *Hermione* the actress revealed her knowledge of the stern truth of life, its trials, its calamities, and the possible heroism of character under its sorrowful discipline. Into that identity she passed by the force of her imagination. The embodiment was majestic, tender, pitiable, transcendent, but its color was the sombre color of pensive melancholy and sad experience. That performance was the higher and more significant of the two. But the higher form of art is not always the more alluring,—never the more alluring when youthful beauty smiles and rosy pleasure beckons another way. All hearts respond to happiness. By her presentment of *Perdita* the actress became the glittering image and incarnation of glorious, youthful womanhood and fascinating joy. No exercise of the imagination was needful to her in that. There was an instantaneous correspondence between the part and the player. The embodiment was as natural as a sunbeam. Shakespeare has left no doubt about his mean-

ing in *Perdita*. The speeches of all around her continually depict her fresh and piquant loveliness, her innate superiority, her superlative charm; while her behavior and language as constantly show forth her nobility of soul. One of the subtlest side-lights thrown upon the character is in the description of the manner in which *Perdita* heard the story of her mother's death—when “attentiveness wounded” her “till, from one sign of dolor to another, she did bleed tears.” And of the fibre of her nature there is perhaps no finer indication than is conveyed in her comment on old *Camillo's* worldly view of prosperity as vitally essential to the permanence of love:—

“I think affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind.”

In the thirty-seven plays of Shakespeare there is no strain of the poetry of sentiment and grace essentially sweeter than that which he has put into the mouth of *Perdita*, and poetry could not be more sweetly spoken than it was by Mary Anderson, in that delicious scene of the distribution of the flowers. The actress evinced comprehension of the character in every fibre of its being, and she embodied it with the affluent vitality of splendid health and buoyant temperament,—presenting a creature radiant with goodness and happiness, exquisite in natural refinement, piquant with archness, soft, innocent, and tender in confiding artlessness, and, while

gleeful and triumphant in beautiful youth, gently touched with an intuitive pitying sense of the thorny aspects of this troubled world. The giving of the flowers completely bewitched her auditors. The startled yet proud endurance of the *King's* anger was in an equal degree captivating. Seldom has the stage displayed that rarest of all combinations, the passionate heart of a woman with the lovely simplicity of a child. Nothing could be more beautiful than she was to the eyes that followed her lithe figure through the merry mazes of her rustic dance,—an achievement sharply in contrast with her usually statuesque manner. It “makes old hearts fresh” to see a spectacle of grace and joy, and that spectacle they saw then, and will not forget. The value of those impersonations of *Hermione* and *Perdita*, viewing them as embodied interpretations of poetry, was great, but they possessed a greater value and a higher significance, as denotements of the guiding light, the cheering strength, the elevating loveliness of a noble human soul. They embodied the conception of the poet, but at the same time they illumined an actual incarnation of the divine spirit. They were like windows to a sacred temple, and through them you could look into the soul of a true woman,—always a realm where thoughts are gliding angels, and feelings are the faces of seraphs, and sounds are the music of the harps of heaven.

VARIOUS PERFORMANCES.

No actress has appeared, in our time, as completely qualified as Mary Anderson was to personify *Pride*. Her stately beauty, absolute poise, distinction, and refinement combined to make her, in a physical sense, the veritable reality of Bulwer's ideal of the proud *Pauline*, in "The Lady of Lyons." She naturally and early presented the perfect image of aristocracy, but *Pauline*, beneath her reserve, is tender and loving, and the actress as naturally and easily expressed the growth and operation of Love. Conflict in a woman's heart between those two forces is the exposition accomplished in the comedy, and while exigent criticism must smile at a wildly romantic plot, incredible incidents, and occasional versified fustian, judgment must concede that the conflict is one well calculated to inspire interest and win sympathy when shown by an actress who is at once beautiful, artistically proficient, and profoundly in earnest. Miss Anderson's fine, woman-like reserve, in that character,—as also in some others,—was, in her time, censured as a fault, and it still is occasionally carped at by an order of mentality less notable for intelligence than for fat-witted conceit and chuckle-brained dulness. It must be indeed an undeveloped or seriously impoverished mind that can view and consider a dramatic performance merely for the purpose of ascertaining whether, by some contriv-

ance of detraction, it can be disparaged. Life is short, and for most persons who feel and think its joys are few and infrequent: to prowl around in the realm of art armed with a microscope, scales, and tape-measure is to sadden it beyond endurance. Nothing but spiritual stagnation can come of such parsimony. There are, of course, times when the mind must work with all its masonic implements—to lay the foundations of judgment, broad and true, in exact knowledge and immutable principles; but in the presence of artistic works which are gracious and lovely in spirit—and therefore filled with help and cheer for the mind that is striving to poise itself in serenity and hope amidst the frets and mutations of life—criticism can well indulge grateful disregard for superficial flaws.

Miss Anderson's expression of the tranquil ecstasy of content, during *Melnotte's* wooing, is remembered as a significant subtlety of her impersonation of *Pauline*. Her assumption of sarcasm, her storm of passion, and her ultimate splendid abandonment, in the Cottage Scenes, revealed a variety of power and a depth of passion that finally refuted those observers who had accounted her frigid in temperament and mechanical in style. At the beginning, with exquisite skill and propriety, she gave to *Pauline* a tone of languid artifice, but that was cast aside the moment the character becomes dominated by genuine feeling, and thereafter the treatment of the ordeal with *Melnotte* was marked

by deep tenderness struggling through righteous, natural, woman-like resentment. The preëminence and especial individuality of the actress were seen to be tragical,—the outbursts, when they came, being somewhat out of harmony with the capability of the part, and, in fact, the wild utterances of a personal nature much larger, broader, and deeper than that which it assumed. So much pathos, however, such lovely use of gentleness, and such forlorn misery in the crushed condition of *Pauline* have seldom, if ever, been infused into an assumption of this character.

In her impersonation of *Julia*, in "The Hunchback," Miss Anderson's denotement of the dignity of grief was intensely impressive. With the lighter elements of the part, its innocence, sweetness, grace, mirth, and pride, and with its transit from rural simplicity to superficial artifice and feather-brained folly, she was easily conversant, and as to those elements her various condition and devious and piquant action were admirable. There comes a time in the experience of *Julia* when almost the greatest sorrow that a woman can feel has suddenly aroused her to a sense of the solemn reality of life and thrown her for support upon the resources of her spiritual strength. At certain moments in the Fourth and Fifth acts of "The Hunchback" the performer of its heroine can show her as rising to a noble height of moral majesty. All littleness falls away from her. The tumult of passion is hushed by the consciousness

of fault and of duty. The mood is one of settled misery, but the soul will be true to itself and adequate to every test that fate may enjoin. It was in her exquisite repose, at the extreme tension of the feeling thus indicated, that Miss Anderson reached the crowning excellence of her *Julia*. It is no common intellect that understands, and no common achievement in the dramatic art that makes others understand, the absolute isolation and loneliness of the human soul in every one of the great experiences of life. That was her victory.

After the late William S. Gilbert (1836-1911) had seen Mary Anderson act *Galatea*, in his "Pygmalion and Galatea," he wrote for her use another play, called "Comedy and Tragedy." Those two plays she often acted on the same night and, doing so, pointed a striking contrast, gave a puissant, convincing evidence of her dramatic power, and provided one of the best theatrical bills of her time.

Her *Galatea* furnished a shining example of what can be accomplished when a character in itself slender receives the investiture of a noble, poetical personality. *Galatea* as embodied by Miss Anderson was a superb type equally of woman's ideal grandeur and woman's human loveliness. The charm which she diffused through the character was that of angelic innocence pervading a sinless though human and passionate love and expressing itself in artless words and ways, which sometimes brought a smile to the lips and sometimes smote the



From a Photograph by Sarony.

In the Collection of T. R. Smith, Esq.

MARY ANDERSON

as

Galatea, in "Pygmalion and Galatea."

heart with a sudden sense of desolate grief. But the meaning with which this actress freighted the experience of *Galatea* was productive, for the character, of a power which transcended its charm. That meaning is the hopelessness of an ideal love or an ideal life under such conditions of existence as those which environ the human race. Such a love may be cherished in the heart; such a love may be lived in the mind; but the one can have no fulfilment and the other must be lonely and cold. In other words, the ideal and the actual in human life are confronted,—not conjoined. Still more, since experience is inexorably operative and must always bring its consequence, any practical surrender to the ideal is a choice of suffering and perhaps of death. A great love must destroy either itself or the being who feels it. True passion is not a wisp-light—it is a consuming flame, and either it must find fruition or it will burn the heart in which it has been enkindled to dust and ashes. There is no creature as lonely as the dweller in the intellect. Those are the truths that Miss Anderson made clear and impressive in her performance of *Galatea*. In her presentment of “Pygmalion and Galatea” she elicited all the thought that is in the play. That irremediable wrench or warp in human nature which seems to have been ever present to the mind of Gilbert—that incongruity, now grotesque and now pitiable, which was constantly visible to him, between goodness and depravity, between loveliness and the debasing

influences of a corrupt world—was steadily manifested. But it remained for Miss Anderson, with her sweeter perception and deeper and gentler insight, to give a broader application to elemental truths. That white marble statue, when all is over, when the play is ended and the heart has ceased to beat,—that crystal image of purity and truth,—is not the symbol of sorrow and defeat, but the emblem of a celestial triumph. Life and love are for the frail and fleeting creatures of the common world. No more worship of a shadow! No more dependence on the shallow and fickle heart of man! No more of disappointment, denial, and the weary, wasting, withering sickness of speechless grief! Tears will never dim those glorious eyes, nor sorrow mar again the perfect peace of that heavenly brow. Mortal life was too narrow, too weak and poor for that immortal spirit. The statue is the victor.

From the first Miss Anderson's performance of *Galatea* was, technically, one of her best works. It presented, even at the outset, few and trivial blemishes, and those soon disappeared. If viewed simply as dramatic execution, without reference to its deep, interior meaning, it was a delight to the faculty of taste and a joy to the sense of sweet and gentle humor, while to the love of beauty it was a supreme contentment. The perfect Greek dress, the white loveliness of the statue, the eager, radiant face, the subtle suggestion of pain as well as rapture in the process of awakening

from the marble, the grace of movement, the complete repose, the finely modulated action, the honest eyes, the softly musical voice—those attributes and graces might be named among its felicities of exterior and of art. No trace of self-consciousness marred the fresh bloom of the Greek girl's innocence. Truth was in every look and every tone. In reverie she had the sweetly grave manner and the winning, confiding helplessness of a child. Her horror at sight of the dead fawn and her terror at sight of its destroyer were so entirely earnest and seemingly natural that they created a distinct illusion and impressed as much as they amused. Her artlessness and her spontaneous glee, in the comic scene with *Chrysos*, were expressed with a delicious variety of elocution and made to communicate a rich glow of enjoyment. Her action and her passionate vehemence of supplication that *Cynisca* will spare *Pygmalion* wrought a superbly tragic effect. Her pathos in the closing scene had the cruel reality of pain, and was indeed a wonderful simulation of misery—not the trivial pique and perplexity that flow from wounded pride, but the utter woe of a broken heart. Every portion of the texture of her work was, to those ends, animated by a fine intelligence and finished with delicate skill.

Galatea is ideal. *Clarice*, in "Comedy and Tragedy," is actual. The crucial situation in which *Clarice* is placed imperatively commands the simultaneous portrayal of a terrific struggle in a woman's heart and of

the exercise of mimetic talents by an accomplished actress. There is but little in the play, aside from that situation. *Clarice* is a wife, and she and her husband are actors. She has been pursued and persecuted with great insolence by a *Regent of France*. Her husband has challenged that oppressor, but the challenge has been declined, with contempt: a prince cannot fight with an actor. In their desperate resentment those wronged and infuriated lovers contrive a plot to lure the *Regent* into their power and compel him to submit to the arbitrament of the sword. The plot succeeds. The two men depart into a garden to fight their duel, in which one must surely die. *Clarice*, momentarily left alone, is soon the centre of a brilliant throng of guests whom she must entertain. They ask a specimen of her art—an illustration of Comedy and Tragedy. *Clarice*, listening all the while for the sounds of the combat outside, and knowing that perhaps her husband may in a moment fall by the hand of their loathsome enemy, must act the part of a strolling player. That she does, and that is the situation. Transparency was used by Mary Anderson, as *Rosalind*, with an effect of winning sweetness: as *Clarice* she used it with an effect of overwhelming tragic power.

II.

EDWARD HUGH SOTHERN, 1859-19—: JULIA MARLOWE, MRS. E. H. SOTHERN, 1862-19—. THE SOTHERN-MARLOWE COMBINATION.

THE names of Edward H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe,—actors whose professional career began in the same period and, after proceeding in adjacent pathways for many years, finally, through their participation in plays of Shakespeare, converged in 1904, and whose private lives were united by marriage, August 17, 1911,—naturally associate themselves in the dramatic record. Mr. Sothorn was born in New Orleans, on December 6, 1859. His first appearance on the stage was made at the new (Abbey's) Park Theatre, New York, on September 8, 1879,—a début which I saw and remember,—in the theatrical company of his distinguished father, Edward Askew Sothorn (1826-1881). The elder Sothorn, early in life, wished to act in tragedy, and to the last he valued his serious more than his comic abilities. His principal success, however, was gained in grotesquely comic, satirical performances,—such as that of *Lord Dundreary*, in his variant of "Our American Cousin," and as *Fitzaltamont*, in "The Crushed

Tragedian." His son Edward, though by temperament and proclivity distinctly a comedian, and though possessed of a less delicate and artistic method than that of his father, early evinced a similar propensity toward serious drama, and he has achieved notable popular success in the field which was closed to the elder actor,—wresting himself from his natural bent, assuming three of the most exacting tragic characters in Shakespeare, making many earnest, studious productions of serious plays, gaining many golden opinions, reflecting credit on his profession and earning for himself recognition and honorable renown in the Theatre of his period. Among conspicuously successful productions made by him, apart from those accomplished in association with Julia Marlowe, the chief are "The Dancing Girl," "Captain Lettarblair," "The Prisoner of Zenda," "The Adventures of Lady Ursula," "The King's Musketeer," "The Sunken Bell," "Hamlet," "Richard Lovelace," "If I Were King," "Richelieu," and "The Fool Hath Said, 'There Is No God.'" Analysis of all those plays and of Mr. Sothern's performances in them is not essential. His *Duke of Guisebury*, *Lettarblair*, and *Rudolph Rassendyll*, for example, were no more than respectable, competent, ephemeral personations by a clever, experienced actor in plays of the hour. Other embodiments of his, by reason both of attempt and accomplishment, as well as of subject, require considerate attention in this work.

"HAMLET."

It is "sweet and commendable" in the nature of any actor that he should wish to impersonate *Hamlet*, for the character is beautiful and the play which it pervades and illumines is one of transcendent intellect and sublimity. There are, however, insuperable obstacles in the way of most actors when they approach that subject. It is, indeed, readily possible for an experienced actor of respectable talent to dress in the customary trappings of woe and to walk conventionally through the part of *Hamlet*, speaking the words smoothly, and giving a more or less picturesque embodiment of meditative melancholy: and this is all that usually is accomplished. The essential quality of the character,—its soul of misery, its grandeur of desolation, its significance as an image of finite man baffled, overwhelmed, and ruined in the struggle to comprehend and dominate the awful mystery of his infinite environment,—is scarcely ever even remotely suggested. The Poet has created and displayed a type of human nature at its highest and best, —a beautiful, exalted soul, shrined in a physical form of perfect grace; a being invested with lofty social station, "the expectancy and rose of the fair state"; environed by circumstances of romantic and awful character; deficient in the attribute of will; o'erladen by the burden of distracting thought; blasted by grief; tainted by madness; overwhelmed not only by terrible

personal affliction but by the accumulation of the shocks and sufferings of earthly experience; alike in tendency and external propulsion made a total failure; the transcendent type of all that is inexplicably strange, dark, and miserable in the spiritual destiny of man. The Stage ordinarily presents, as a correlative of that image, a handsome young man, his face carefully clean shaven, his hair carefully curled, attired in neat and becoming black velvet clothes, looking as though on the instant liberated from a band-box, with no more sense of the terrible facts of moral responsibility, spiritual suffering, life, death, and an inscrutable destiny, than a feather has of the breeze by which it is blown.

Many actors have played *Hamlet* in a respectable manner. E. L. Davenport was, for many years, customarily accepted and cited as, in all respects, an efficient and thoroughly satisfactory representative of the part. He had a sufficiently correct ideal of it for practical purposes, and he expressed that ideal clearly, fluently, and with effective precision; but, probably, no one of his auditors was ever thrilled, fascinated, or even deeply moved by his expression of it, howsoever impressed by his profound reverence for the subject and by the inherent power and magical charm of the play; and this, which was true of Davenport, was also true of his compeers, such as Forrest, Murdock, Couldock, Vandenhoff, Marshall, and others, the capable, admired, and honored chieftains of a by-gone age. The simple



From a Photograph by Schloss.

In the Collection of the Author.

EDWARD H. SOTHERN
as
Hamlet.

truth is that no actor has ever really conquered as *Hamlet*, or can ever hope to conquer, unless possessed of the temperament of genius, possessed of the *Hamlet* nature,—which commingles great intellect, great imagination, and great tenderness, with a constitutional susceptibility to melancholy,—and possessed, also, of that strange personal allurements, partly physical beauty, partly inspirational light, and partly spiritual charm, which never yet was wholly explicable in words, but which never yet has failed, in whatsoever branch of art made manifest, to diffuse an irresistible enchantment for the human race. In many other characters the efficiency of trained talent proves adequate and victorious; never in *Hamlet*.

Mr. Sothorn, an actor of exceptional talent—whose assumption of *Hamlet* was first made known at the Garden Theatre, New York, on September 17, 1899, and which, since then, has become familiar throughout America—gave a performance of which it can justly be said that it was careful, intelligent, thoughtful, and respectably good. It is not disparagement which records the fact that Mr. Sothorn is, essentially, a comedian: it is judgment in classification and definition of acting. In attempting *Hamlet* he measured himself by a colossal standard, and, considering the slender calibre of his natural gifts and cultivated powers, it is much to his credit that he did not dash himself to pieces in the effort. He did not embody *Hamlet*, but he presented, after the

manner of eminent mediocrity, a sufficiently interesting type of fantastic mental disturbance and juvenile gloom. The principal attributes of his embodiment of the man whom he displayed as *Hamlet* were sincerity of purpose, earnestness of mind, strenuous effort, and fitful, spasmodic force. He spoke the text with fluency, and, though seldom with expressive modulation such as is sequent on spontaneity of feeling, with a propriety of intelligence that usually apprehended and conveyed its surface meanings. He indicated a right sense of filial tenderness and reverence. He showed a certain nobility of righteous scorn and moral fervor,—notably in the Closet Scene,—and, once or twice (as when listening to the *Ghost*, apostrophizing “your gracious figure,” and uttering *Hamlet’s* dying words), he became mournfully passionate and momentarily sympathetic. On the other hand, he lacked personal distinction, innate princely authority, grace of movement, invariable clarity of articulation, mobility of facial expression, deep tenderness of feeling, depth, variety, and charm of voice, that sense of being haunted which only a powerful imagination can awaken and impart, and, at certain great pivotal moments of the tragedy,—such as *Hamlet’s* first meeting with the *Ghost*; his parting with *Ophelia*; his delirium at the climax of “the mouse trap” play, and his frenzied joy and horror at the killing of *Polonius*,—he conspicuously lacked the passion that should be electrical and the tragic power that should carry all before it.

Of the corrosive misery of *Hamlet*,—misery that has sapped the foundations of his mind and life, and which steadily, mercilessly, inexorably, and irresistibly burns out his heart and propels him onward to ruin and death,—he gave no adequate denotement. In a word, from the first performance and until the latest repetition, his personation of this marvellous part, though gaining in force, feeling, and the nice adjustment and flexibility of mechanism, began, continued, and ended completely within the limits of stage utility, the conventional, and the commonplace.

In Mr. Sothern's earliest revival of the tragedy much effort was visible to create novelty of effect by invention of new stage business, such as each successive new *Hamlet* seeks to contribute, and by various restorations and excisions in the text, which sometimes obscured the meaning. A better, because clearer and shorter, text was ultimately utilized by this actor, and the play was set with thoughtful regard to archæological detail—the exterior view of Elsinore Castle, in particular, a gloomy, gray, antique fabric, overhanging the sea, being imaginative in composition and beautiful in effect.

The instructive facts are that, in the Ghost Scenes, which are the test scenes of this tragedy, Mr. Sothern neither expressed awe nor inspired terror; that his delivery of the speech on life and death and the “something after death” was so hollow and superficial as to

be completely insignificant; that he did not dominate, as surely *Hamlet* ought to do, the climax of the Play Scene; that he was merely melodramatic in the killing of *Polonius*—a crisis so terrible that it ought almost to rend the hearts of his hearers; and that, from first to last, his demeanor and speech, his repose and action, all the concurrent attributes of his personality, were so void of authoritative puissance, so light and thin, that, while he pleased by his earnestness, he often seemed hopelessly frivolous. Denial of his abstract merit as a conscientious and capable actor would be idle and wrong, but no man rationally expects to be applauded who goes to sea in a teaspoon. Less than that, in censure of his performance, remembering what this great play really is, would be weakness; more than that, in his praise, would be folly. The standard by which a dramatic artist is to be judged is not that of technical utility or monetary gain.

“RICHARD LOVELACE.”

Mr. Sothern appeared, September 9, 1901, at the Garden Theatre, New York, presenting the play by Laurence Irving called “Richard Lovelace.” That play is the image of a romantic, sanguinary, grievous love affair, which, fancifully speaking, befell in the old city of Worcester, England, in 1651, and in which the English poet Lovelace was the principal participant. Worcester, in 1651, was held by the army of King

Charles the Second and was beleaguered by that of the Parliament, under Cromwell. Among its inhabitants were *Alderman Sacheverell* and his beautiful daughter, *Lucy*. The *Alderman*, once wealthy, had become impoverished, and he was a spy in the service of *Cromwell*. *Sacheverell* and his daughter dwelt in an attic lodging, and *Colonel Hawley*, an elderly officer, of the royal service, occupied an adjacent room. *Hawley* had fallen in love with *Lucy Sacheverell*, but had not prospered in his wooing. On the day of the battle of Worcester (Cromwell's "crowning mercy") *Richard Lovelace*, escaping many perils, made his way into that city, seeking to fight for the *King*, and also seeking *Colonel Hawley*, who was his friend, and by chance he came to *Sacheverell's* lodging, saw *Lucy*, and instantly loved her,—so that the comrades at once became rivals. *Lucy*, who had already been fascinated by the poetry of *Lovelace*, no sooner saw him, in his beauty, than she yielded her fancy to his enchantment. The jealous *Hawley*, blinded by passion, thereupon basely contrived to send him to a place, in the impending battle, where there was to be a mine explosion, of which he had obtained a warning, in which explosion he trusted that his rival would be killed. The treachery prospered. *Lovelace* was thought to have perished, and, after a time, *Lucy* married *Colonel Hawley*. *Lovelace*, however, severely wounded, nevertheless in some measure recovered, and, with that fidelity to an ideal which is the

poet's dream, he installed himself in *Mr. Sacheverell's* abandoned lodging, and there, for several years,—keeping all things as *Lucy* had left them,—he dwelt, in penury, cherishing the image of a lost love. Such a posture of circumstances might seem fantastic, but stranger things than that have happened, in human experience, and with the sovereign passion all things are possible. There came a day, at last, when *Lucy* and her husband, travelling by way of Worcester, paused, at her solicitation, to revisit their old residence, so that the lovers again met and the rivals were again confronted. In that meeting the catastrophe to *Lovelace* was explained, the infamy of *Hawley* was exposed, and *Lovelace*, in a frenzy of despairing wrath and yet of magnanimity, compelled a conflict with his enemy in which he intentionally perished.

There is precipitation in the conduct of the plot of this touching drama, there is a trace of improbability in a few of its incidents, and the language, being of one invariable kind, is not adjusted to the different characters of the several speakers; but the story is dramatically and therefore effectively told, the movement of it is continuous and cumulative, the situations are sharply defined, and the persons are made to express, amply and pointedly, the feelings by which they are animated. The play is avowedly romantic,—a fanciful fiction, not a chronicle of fact,—and judgment of it should bear in mind that romance is the antithesis

of reality. Its defects are precipitancy, sombre color, and occasional monotony.

Information about the poet Lovelace is derived, chiefly, from the antiquarian Anthony Á Wood, and, in some respects, it is dubious and meagre. He was the eldest son of Sir William Lovelace, of Woolwich, county of Kent, born in 1618, and educated at the Charterhouse, London, and at Oxford. He was honorably graduated from that university in 1636, and he then went to the Court of King Charles the First, under the patronage of Lord Goring, and presently he joined the royal army and followed the King's standard into Scotland. He inherited a valuable estate, but, steadfastly adhering to the unfortunate royal cause, he suffered great losses. In 1646 he led a regiment, which he had raised, in the service of King Louis the Fourteenth, and at the battle of Dunkirk he was severely wounded. Two years later he returned to London, and there he passed the rest of his life. He was married: mention is made of his daughter, Margaret Lovelace, who became the wife of Henry Coke, one of the sons of the famous Chief Justice, and who possessed an estate which had belonged to her father, at Kingsdown. Lovelace was more than once imprisoned by the government, and toward the end of his days he became miserably poor. Wood records that, in his youth, he was distinguished for extraordinary personal beauty and for every virtue, that he wore cloth of gold and silver, and that he was adored by women,

There is some mystery about the close of his career. It seems likely that his property was withheld from him by the strong hand of arbitrary power, and there appears to be good reason for believing that his miseries were augmented by a disappointment in love. He was enamoured of a woman named Lucy Sacheverell, whom, in his poems, he celebrates as "Lucasta," and with whom, apparently, he had established an intimacy before he went to the siege of Dunkirk. * He customarily called her "Lux Casta." He found, on his return from France, after the Battle of Dunkirk, that Lucy Sacheverell had married, believing him to have died, and possibly that disappointment, combined with ill-health and loss of fortune, broke his spirit. He went about in rags, he lived in squalid places, he sometimes subsisted on alms, he ultimately fell into a consumption, and he died in deplorable penury. His death occurred in a mean lodging, somewhere near Shoe Lane, London, in 1658, when he was only forty years old, and he was buried in the west end of St. Bride's Church, in Fleet Street. His poems fill two little volumes, one called "Lucasta," published in 1649, the other called "Posthume Poems," published ten years later: both have been reprinted. He also wrote two plays,—one called "The Scholar," the other "The Soldier." His best poem is the ode "To Althea, from Prison." The art of it is not faultless, as any reader can perceive, on examination of the rhymes, but the spontaneous lyrical passion of it is

irresistible, and the movement is as free as the waft of a sea-bird's wing. It probably was written, as good lyrical poems usually are, without the least effort, and in a few moments,—though there is a whole lifetime of passion and suffering back of it.

Laurence Irving, in writing this play, manifestly took some liberty with the facts of the poet's life, but in a play the essential quality is action that culminates in dramatic effect, and much that inexorable reason would exact must be sacrificed in order to obtain that quality. The dramatist has exhibited the heroic, chivalrous, romantic, passionate yet gentle strain of the character of *Lovelace*, and his use of fancy in the matter of circumstance cannot be considered either extravagant or injurious. A large license has generally to be allowed to the playwright who weaves his wreaths of fancy around historic persons. It is, of course, essential that calumny should not be transmitted in any form of literature from age to age: but theatrical estimates of illustrious historic persons, such as Julius Cæsar and Napoleon Bonaparte, need not cause serious solicitude. Such persons have, necessarily, become themes of active controversy, and they can bear any amount of wash, whether it be black or white. It does seem desirable, however, that when a dramatist invades the comparatively humble realm of literary biography discreet consideration should be accorded to the ascertained truth. That discretion has not always been exercised. Shake-

speare has been made a stilted guy in drama. The poet Richard Savage, bad as he was, has been made worse in a play. The poet Chatterton, a boy of intricate and astonishing character, has been theatrically converted into a sentimental simpleton, starving and dying in a garret, because his sweetheart did not make a timely arrival. Goldsmith, Burns, Byron, and Poe have been misrepresented. Moore has been absurdly depicted. Sheridan, that marvel of brilliancy, has been shown as an ass. Admiral Nelson and Emma Hamilton and Count D'Orsay and Lady Blessington have been coarsely victimized. There is no limit to the opportunity of theatrical distortion that is provided by the literary field. The much married poet Milton offers a fruitful subject for stage fresco. Carew, Lyttelton, Suckling, Carey (grandfather of Edmund Kean),—each of them might be made the protagonist of a scandalous play. The list could readily be lengthened. Good taste, however, would have every reason to be content if all dramatists working in the field thus indicated were to prove as tasteful, adroit, and ingenuous in their fables concerning literary notabilities of the past, and as sympathetic and felicitous in their characterization of ideals, as Laurence Irving did in his portrayal of Richard Lovelace.

Mr. Sothern, as *Lovelace*, impersonated an expeditious, impetuous, chivalric cavalier, such, in general, as he had often made agreeably known on the local Stage,

but his embodiment was deeper in feeling, more sharply defined, more vital, more authoritative with continuity of impersonation, more self-poised, and, alike in speech and action, more rounded and finished than either of his previous impersonations had been, in serious drama. The soldier was martial, the lover was impassioned, but the man was in earnest and he evinced the repose of deep feeling. The actor, evidently, felt the nobility, beauty, and pathos of the ideal to which he imparted form, and he showed that he had thought on it, entered into the soul of it, sought to become identified with it, and so made it live. The part is replete with fluctuations of emotion, but the personality is dominated by one passion. Love at first sight (rare, no doubt, but possible), is first to be expressed; then absolute and joyous trust of confiding friendship; then quick sense of honor, commingled with the glowing impetuosity of eager and dauntless courage; then momentary suspicion of ill-usage, quickly quenched in reckless excitement; then the languor of silent sorrow, the monotonous dejection of hopeless surrender, the patient, abject state which the poet Tennyson has so expressively designated as "the set, gray life and apathetic end"; and then, finally, the sudden reanimation of the whole being, desperately seeking, and finding, the great and merciful refuge of death. Mr. Sothern, playing *Lovelace*, manifested the true lover's sense of the sanctity of the woman whom he loves. He was whole-hearted, simple and true, as a

comrade. He revealed at least a theoretical knowledge of sorrow when in the dead calm of adversity,—though that part of his performance was its weakest link, just as that part of the play showed itself to be its most artificial component. In *Lovelace's* final encounter with his opponent,—from whom he extorts the boon of a death wound,—he vitalized the scene with a fine tumult of feeling, and he acted with such simplicity as not even once to mar the dignity and grace of the situation,—attributes indispensable to its pathetic effect. His delivery of the speech about the sanctity of the room in which the idolized *Lucy* has lived and his acting at the moment when *Lovelace* perceives her unexpected approach are remembered with warm admiration, for fidelity to nature and beauty of art. In the closing scene, which is overweighted by emphasis and attenuation of agony, the melody of a pathetic vocalism would have been of inestimable value—but that is an attribute Mr. Sothern has not shown and, apparently, cannot acquire. The “sad ending” was, as usual, deplored, but grief has its privilege; and Mr. Irving’s play, in moving the heart to pity and the mind to thought, is not merely an idle exemplification of its fortunate epigraph, couched in the words of the unfortunate and unhappy *Lovelace*:

“Vain dreams of love! that only so much bliss
Allow us as to know our wretchedness,
And deal a larger measure in our pain,
By showing joy, then hiding it again.”

"IF I WERE KING."

The play of "If I Were King," by Justin Huntly McCarthy,—which Mr. Sothern brought out at the Garden Theatre on October 14, 1901—illustrates an imaginary episode in the life of François Villon (1431-14—), the dissolute French poet who wrote "The Greater Testament," etc. It contains a little of almost everything, from a duel by the light of lanterns to a ballet in a bower of roses; pothouse wrangles and poetic recitations, plots and counterplots, disguises, hairbreadth escapes and the splendors of military spectacle. Although it lacks the power, weight, and consistent sincerity of serious drama, such as grows out of actual human life and takes hold on earnest human feelings, it is a graceful piece of gossamer and it gained abundant, long continued success. The style is marred by occasional infelicity of phrase and by language that is inappropriate and inelegant, and the colloquy is hampered and retarded by excess of sentimental versification, by a superflux of flowery talk, and by needless persons and incidents. The closing scene—disclosing a gibbet, the hero and heroine in imminent danger and an eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute pardon—is handled in such a way as to divest it of probability, even were it not inherently preposterous. But it is romantic in character, animated in movement, agreeably diversified by incident, written in a sprightly though sometimes redundant style, and it

was provided with a pleasing investiture of picturesque scenery, so that while feeding the fancy and satisfying the vision, it afforded ample entertainment. The ground plan of the fable is old, but it has not outgrown its intrinsic allurements, and it commends itself to renewed favor by some novelty of treatment. Once again the *King* prowls around his capital, in disguise, in order that he may hear the talk of his subjects and acquaint himself, by personal observation, with their views and feelings, and once again the adventurous monarch meets with the indigent but exuberant patriot who could govern all things well if only he might have the opportunity of sway. Those persons have long been known in fiction, and their presence has always been enjoyed.

In this instance the furtive sovereign is the grisly, wily, cruel *King Louis the Eleventh*, while the potential savior of the state is the audacious, merry, tuneful, indomitable, impecunious *Villon*. The monarch and the poet meet in a tavern in Paris, to which the former has repaired in quest of political advantage, while the latter has come thither in reckless dissipation, sad with hopeless love and bitter against himself and all the world. Being there, he is suddenly enabled, in the interest of a woman whom he loves, to foil the intrigues of a treacherous *Constable of France*. The garrulous bard, unaware of his royal auditor, freely descants on what he would do if he were King, and when, presently, he has assailed and defeated the disloyal *Constable*, who

is present for a purpose of knavery, he is startled to find himself taken at his word by the ruler of France, and installed in the office of his discomfited and degraded foe. During one week, as ordained by the offended sovereign, he can exercise authority; then he must suffer death, for treasonable censure of the *King*. His regnant conduct, as *Constable of France*, is the substance of the play, and this conduct is, by turns, humorous, sentimental, and martial: he passes judgment, in a comic yet righteously benevolent strain, on his unruly old companions of the tavern; mystifies and enraptures the woman of his love and, by his valorous leadership of the army, in battle, defeats the assailing forces of rebellious *Burgundy* and maintains intact the fortitude of Paris. At the close of his brief reign, and when the scaffold has been set for his execution, he is redeemed by the devoted fidelity of a woman's heart—*King Louis* having agreed to accept a vicarious sacrifice and *Katherine de Vaucelles*, whom *Villon* loves, being willing to die for him.

This is "Gringoire"—with a difference. But it is all free, gay, and pleasant, and Mr. Sothern,—ardent, impetuous, pictorial, as *Villon*,—gave a smooth and dashing performance in a sympathetic mood and an expert style. The part is one of the showy, laborious order, imposing on its representative the need of a wide range of simulation—for *Villon* is by turns and in rapid succession vagabond, poet, tosspot, lover, brawler, soldier,

schemer, moral hero, and ideal gentleman; but the comedian flashed boldly through all changes, and was deficient only in that winning quality of vocalism, expressive of feeling and diffusive of poetic glamour, which is the dominant charm of the romantic actor.

“RICHELIEU.”

Mr. Sothern acted the *Cardinal*, in Bulwer's fine play of “Richelieu,” for the first time in New York on March 29, 1909, at Daly's Theatre. In choosing that part he chose wisely, because, aside from the fact that it admits of superb dramatic effect, it is consonant with the refinement of his style and calculated to elicit an effective use of his best serious powers. His performance of *Richelieu* was not intrinsically good in ideal and in some particulars of execution, but it was auspicious of much higher achievement. He did not express either the deep tenderness of *Richelieu's* nature, as it has been drawn by the poet, or the pathetic loneliness, the intellectual isolation, of his age, but he gave a worthy and creditable representation of the stately ecclesiastic and the crafty statesman. There is, in *Richelieu*, a massive distinction of commanding personality, which can, indeed, be imitated, but which cannot be embodied unless it is possessed, and that weight of majestic character reposes on a basis of profound feeling: the passions have been lulled to rest, but they only slumber, and when they burst forth they irradiate a noble intellect

and make it sublime in its protective vindication of virtue and honor.

There is, fortunately (because everybody can, thereby, sooner or later be pleased), a wide difference of opinion as to the province of drama and as to what should be considered the essential constituents of a great play. The comedy of "*Richelieu*," which has held the stage for about seventy-five years, contains action, story, character, situation, suspense, contrast, and picture, and it blends humor and pathos. The central character,—unique, sympathetic, essentially human and continuously interesting,—is a great man, whose inspiring motive is patriotic devotion. No actor since Edwin Booth left the stage has fully manifested *Richelieu*. Macready, the first representative of the part, was long considered supreme and incomparable in it, but the veteran John Ryder,—who came to America with Macready, and acted with him, and idolized him,—said to Edwin Booth, after seeing Booth's *Richelieu*: "You have overthrown my idol." Forrest was effective in it. John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, and Henry Irving gave admirable performances of it,—that of Irving being notable for an artistic infusion of the French temperament and quality: but no one of those performances rose to the grandeur which invested the embodiment of the *Cardinal* given by Edwin Booth. That performance was perfect: it enthralled every beholder, and it will dwell forever in the annals of great acting. The best representative of

Richelieu now on the American Stage is Robert Mantell,—the best, because he possesses the deep heart, the large experience of life, the philosophy, the repose, and the power that are imperatively essential. It is inevitable when, as happened at the time of Mr. Sothern's first attempt in *Richelieu*, two prominent actors appear at the same time in the same character that a comparison of their performances will glide into an observer's thoughts. In one particular Mr. Sothern had the advantage: in his performance of the *Cardinal* there was a little more of that deliberation and that attention to detail which are vitally essential to the effect of the part, but his personation lacked that inherent majesty of soul, that simplicity of demeanor, and that overwhelming power which were prominent and right in the performance given by Mr. Mantell.

Mr. Sothern's acting showed careful and thoughtful study, and likewise it indicated acquaintance with some of the stage examples,—notably those of Barrett and McCullough, as well as that of Edwin Booth, and possibly that of Creston Clarke, Booth's nephew, who gave a striking performance of the part, closely copying that of his uncle. Mr. Sothern's "make-up" was good, although the hair (described in the text as "whitening") was yellow rather than gray. His execution was firm and generally neat, though deficient of flexibility. His development of the *Cardinal's* slightly ironical humor was instinct with satirical but not unkindly playfulness,

—shown to the auditor, while veiled from the interlocutor, by expert use of transparency. A radical defect was finical juvenility,—singular in the case of an actor no longer young. The *Richelieu* of fact died at the age of fifty-seven; the *Richelieu* of the play is, prematurely, much older. A more serious defect was the hard, brittle, unsympathetic vocalism. In the climax of the Fourth Act,—where the decisive test is applied,—Mr. Sothorn was obviously and conspicuously artificial. The situation, no doubt, is one that has been artfully devised to create a theatrical effect; but, when it is rightly treated, the artifice of its fabric is not apparent, except to expert observation: and, notwithstanding the commonplace notion of top-lofty criticism, that things done on the stage should be “done only because you can see no reason why they should be done,” the situation is neither forced nor unnatural.

It was one of the peculiarities of the *Richelieu* of fact that by power of will he was able at times to compel himself to vigorous exertion when, almost at the same instant, he had been fainting. Moreover, great situations *do*, sometimes, occur, even in actual life, and sometimes they *are* greatly met. Genius could enforce, and has enforced, the truth of nature in that pivotal situation in the play of “*Richelieu*.” The expedient of obvious strength, obviously pretending to be weakness, will not serve an actor’s purpose there. The tremendous excitement of that moment suddenly ani-

mates breaking age with the vigor of intense nervous energy, and the threat of the curse of Rome leaps from the *Cardinal's* lips like lightning from the cloud. That great scene supplies one more illustration of the paradox of acting. The emotion involved is tremendous, and the conditions rapidly change. The actor is at full tension, yet he must take precisely the right amount of time, must make every movement with precision, must place aright every inflection of tone and every shading of verbal accent, and, while his passion must be tumultuous and terrible, he must hold both himself and his audience with a grip of iron. Mr. Sothern, apparently, had not absorbed the full meaning of the fact that *Richelieu*, when defied as the Minister of State, asserts himself as the accredited Minister of God. Voice and vigor imperatively require to be reinforced by the towering conviction of ecclesiastical supremacy.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID, 'THERE IS NO GOD,'"

In the character of *Rodion Rasnikoff*, in "The Fool Hath Said, 'There Is No God,'" which Mr. Sothern assumed for the first time in New York at the Lyric Theatre on March 9, 1908, he afforded a thoughtful study of morbid mentality and gave a clear, consistent, rounded, and finished representation of a half-crazed enthusiast. The play, written by Laurence Irving, is a theatrical synopsis of a Russian novel, by Fedor Dostoievski, called "Crime and Punishment." The sub-

ject was originally brought upon our Stage by Richard Mansfield, who enacted *Rodion*, in a play made for his use by Mr. Charles Henry Meltzer and entitled "Rodion the Student," but Mansfield's performance did not much interest his public, and the part of *Rodion* was, practically, discarded by him. Mr. Sothern's presentment of the Russian zealot, while it illustrated his ability and heightened his reputation as an actor, did not meet with any more substantial approval than Mansfield's did. It was a curiosity, and valuable only as such. There is a taint of disease in the character, and there is a hectic atmosphere throughout the play, unrelieved by either superiority of intellect, poetic emotion, or imaginative treatment.

The action, which is slow, proceeds on a low level, and the theme is confined within the limits of prosaic fact. *Rodion*, infuriated by the prospect of social corruption all around him, in Russia, resentful of social inequalities, crazed by brooding over continual acts of injustice and tyranny, at last murders a brutal man in order to save the honor and chastity of a good girl whom the brute has pursued with hideous lust. The usual police effort ensues to detect and apprehend the murderer. Suspicion falls on *Rodion*, who, for a time, believes himself to have done a righteous and justifiable act, and who, though haunted and perplexed by consciousness of homicide, maintains himself in fancied security. An astute, insistent, indefatigable officer of the

law, however, resorts to the expedient—a very old one in fiction—of causing the murder to be rehearsed in *Rodion's* presence, and by that means so works upon his sensibilities that he is made almost frantic and very nearly driven to an agonized confession. The foreground of the play is occupied with an exposition of *Rodion's* peculiar mental state, his domestic circumstances, and his vacillation of purpose. The centre of it exhibits his anguish and, practically, his collapse and surrender, under the strain of inquisitorial torture. The close presents him as a convert from his early theories. His release has been effected through the action of one of two artisans, both accused of *Rodin's* crime, who, in an effort to save his comrade, bears false witness against himself; and then his mind is restored to comparative equilibrium by the pious counsel and admonition of *Sonia Martinora*, the girl for whose sake he did the murder; and whereas, at first, he was strong in the opinion that there is no God and that every man is entitled to take into his own hands the execution of justice, he is at last persuaded that God reigns and that vengeance is a province of Divine Power.

The worth of the fabric, such as it is, is resident in its detective quality. As a play it appertains to the category of such melodramas as "Rose Michel," and such novels as "A Wife's Evidence" and "Uncle Silas." In the time of the old Union Square Theatre the public was favored with many works of that order. They are

well enough, in their way, but their way does not amount to much. This one is seriously marred by the complete incredibility of many of its incidents. It did, however, provide Mr. Sothern with one opportunity, in the Inquisitorial Scene, to exhibit a considerable range of emotion and a facile method in the display and use of it. In point of sustained identity with assumed personality it was an excellent performance.

JULIA MARLOWE.

Julia Marlowe is the stage name of Sarah Frances Frost, who was born at Caldbeck, a village in Cumberland, England, August 17, 1867. Her progenitors were natives of the English Lake District, but though by birth an Englishwoman, her theatrical career has been, from the first, pursued in America, and she is essentially an American actress. Her parents immigrated to the United States when she was about five years old, and settled in Kansas,—subsequently removing to Ohio. In childhood she attended school, at first in Kansas City, later in Cincinnati. Her first appearance on the stage was made in the latter city, when she was in her twelfth year, as a chorus girl, in a performance of "Pinafore," given under the management of Robert E. J. Miles, a well known manager at that time and later (he died March 13, 1894), who, in forming his company, had hit on the ingenious expedient of including, in his supernumerary force, a few bright

pupils from the public schools. The girl made a favorable impression and thereupon was duly advanced. She appeared as *Suzanne*, in "The Chimes of Normandy," and as a *Page*, in "The Little Duke," and she was commended for her pretty demeanor, animated countenance, and sweet voice.

From opera the youthful aspirant went to drama, and, performing under the name of Fanny Brough, appeared as the boy *Heindrich*, in a version of "Rip Van Winkle," produced with Robert McWade, one of the many imitators of Joseph Jefferson, as *Rip*. She also attempted *Maria*, in "Twelfth Night," and went on as *Balthasar*, in "Romeo and Juliet"; *Stephen*, in "The Hunchback," and *Myrene*, in "Pygmalion and Galatea." In her sixteenth year she left the stage, and during about three years devoted herself to study of plays, acting, and music, under the direction, chiefly, of Miss Ada Dow. In 1887, having adopted the name of Julia Marlowe, she appeared as an actress, assuming the part of *Parthenia*, in "Ingomar." Her first appearance on the New York Stage was effected, in that part, on the afternoon of October 20, 1887, at the Bijou Theatre. In December, 1888, she again appeared in the metropolis, acting, at the Star Theatre, *Parthenia*, *Viola*, and *Juliet*. Within the next six years she added to her repertory the characters of *Julia*, in "The Hunchback"; *Pauline*, in "The Lady of Lyons"; *Rosalind*, in "As You Like It"; *Galatea*, in "Pygmalion and Gala-

tea"; *Beatrice*, in "Much Ado About Nothing"; *Imogen*, in "Cymbeline"; *Constance*, in "The Love Chase," and *Letitia Hardy*, in "The Belle's Stratagem." In 1891 she performed as *Charles Hart*, in "Rogues and Vagabonds," by Mr. Malcolm Bell, and, in 1893, as *Chatterton*, in a play on the story of that unfortunate boy, by Ernest Lacy.

In 1894 Julia Marlowe was married to Robert Taber, an actor of ability, who had been the leading man in her dramatic company. The marriage proved unhappy and, in 1900, Mrs. Taber obtained a divorce. (Taber died, of tuberculosis, March 7, 1904, at a refuge in the Adirondack Mountains, provided for him,—for he had been rendered practically destitute by illness,—through the goodness of his former wife.) Mr. and Mrs. Taber had sometimes acted in professional association and sometimes each of them had headed a separate company. Prior to their legal separation the actress had played *Lady Teazle*, in "The School for Scandal"; *Colombe*, in Robert Browning's "Colombe's Birthday"; *Kate Hardcastle*, in "She Stoops To Conquer"; *Prince Hal*, in "King Henry IV."; *Romola*, in a play based on the novel of that name by George Eliot, and *Mary*, in "For Bonnie Prince Charlie," an English adaptation of "Les Jacobites," by François Coppée. Later she acted *Valeska*, *Colinette*, and *Barbara Frietchie*, in plays named after their respective heroines, and *Mary Tudor*, in a drama called "When Knighthood Was In Flower";

she had also performed *Lydia Languish*, in "The Rivals," having been a member of the company of stars engaged by Joseph Jefferson for the representation of that comedy, in 1896. Among her later performances, aside from those in association with Mr. Sothern, mention should be made of *Fiametta*, in "The Queen Fiametta," 1902; *Charlotte Oliver*, in "The Cavalier," a play by Messrs. Paul Kester and George Middleton, based on a novel by George W. Cable, 1902, and *Lady Barchester*, in "Fools of Nature," by H. V. Esmond, 1904. On September 19, 1904, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe began their professional alliance, at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, in "Romeo and Juliet." They continued to act together for three seasons: after that they again headed separate companies. They were reunited in 1909, since which time they have continued to act together. In 1906-'07 they coöperated in performances of "Jeanne D'Arc," by Percy Mackaye; "John the Baptist" ("Johannes"), by Hermann Sudermann, and "The Sunken Bell" ("Die Versunkene Glocke"), by Gerhart Hauptmann. In April, 1907, they made a professional appearance in London, lasting six weeks, but they were not received with favor. Their marriage occurred in that city, four years later. On February 15, 1909, Miss Marlowe appeared at Daly's Theatre as *Yvette*, in "The Goddess of Reason," by Miss Mary Johnston. On November 8, 1909, Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe opened the ill-starred New The-



From a Drawing by Strauss-Payton, 1912.

JULIA MARLOWE.

atre, acting in "Antony and Cleopatra." Their regular repertory includes "Hamlet," "Romeo and Juliet," "Twelfth Night," "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Merchant of Venice," "The Taming of the Shrew," "As You Like It," and "Macbeth." Miss Marlowe's Shakespearean performances have been seen at their best in her maturity and thus in association with Mr. Sothern, and they can, therefore, be most conveniently considered together with those of that actor in the same plays. Representative early performances of hers were *Parthenia*, *Mary*, *Colinette*, *Barbara Frietchie*, and *Mary Tudor*.

"INGOMAR."

The play of "Ingomar,"—a delicate fabric of poetic fancy, completely elusive of the test of fact,—contrasts strongly, and favorably, with many modern plays now current and prosperous, but the audience that approves theatrical pepper will ever consider it insipid. The motive of it is noble. The atmosphere of it is pure. The spirit of it is beautiful. The allegory involved in it is one that should impart cheer and encouragement to every believer in the possible goodness of human nature, and the attainment of, at least, a little felicity in the life of the human affections. That allegory signifies the conquest of arrogant strength by gentle weakness; of ignorance by knowledge; of brutality by refinement; of barbaric passion by perfect innocence; of the animal by the spiritual. All votaries of the Stage

are familiar with the story and many old playgoers have sweet memories associated with the character of *Parthenia*.

The Greek girl who goes among the barbarians, to redeem her father from slavery, must be, essentially, true; must impart the decisive impression of purity, gentleness, courage, honor, unconscious capability of heroism, and artless candor; and she must create the effect of absolute innocence and simplicity. Expert treatment of this character would always win admiration, but it would never arouse enthusiasm, because it would never touch the heart. Much depends on art, but more, especially in this case, on nature. Miss Marlowe, in her performance of *Parthenia*, when she revived it at the Empire Theatre, May 16, 1904, only deepened the charming impression that she had made in it as a girl; and she did so because,—while her personality was seen to have become ultra-potent for that of the Greek maid,—the essential goodness of her mind and temperament suffused the character, and filled it with warmth, loveliness, and light. A proficient actress knows, of course, how to seem ingenuous; how to express the pretty perversity of wilful girlhood, and how to employ the natural wiles of feminine allurements; but, over all that proficiency, there must be a certain glamour of spontaneous grace, and this can be diffused only by an actress from whose spirit it is liberated as the fragrance is from the rose. Miss Marlowe's impersonation evinced

mental nobility and spiritual grace, and, for the passing hour, she made an incredible achievement quite plausible by personal enchantment and by that grateful witchery of fancy which causes momentary oblivion of the generally arid world of fact. No other performer, since the happy time of Mary Anderson, has, in this or any kindred character, so convincingly expressed the frank, blithe courage that comes of absolute unconsciousness of danger, and therewithal the condition of simplicity which yet is alert with intelligence and piquant with arch and kindly mirth. The gradual growth of the girl's consciousness of the subjugation of the barbarian chief, and, later, her dawning perception of her own subjugation, were, in particular, deftly and sweetly denoted. The part, in a certain sense, and in the right person, plays itself, but it needs fine restraint and delicate tact, —especially at such passages as the repulse of *Polydore*, the cleansing of the cups, the assumption of the weapons, and the supplication to the *Timarch*. In those passages Miss Marlowe showed the value of her ample experience. For impetuosity and tragical force there is little opportunity. *Parthenia* is an image of loveliness, and as such she was admirably presented. The one outburst of tragical emotion occurs at the moment of the girl's defiance of the barbarian, when his delirium of passion bids fair to overwhelm them both. There the actress aroused an enthusiastic response: but her predominant triumph was in the gentler aspects of womanhood. The

exquisite modulation of her voice had a delicious effect. The delicate flexibility of her elocution, sequent on fine intelligence and sympathetic feeling, descending into every word and making every shade of meaning instantly obvious, made her delivery a continuous delight. Miss Marlowe, in her later revivals of this old drama (derived from a German original and known to our Stage, intermittently, for about sixty years), judiciously condensed it, making slight alterations that accelerated its movement and enhanced its effect. Cynicism may smile at this old play and its impossible story: the sneer is always easy: but our Theatre sadly needs relief from a burdensome, destructive literature of vice and folly, and, until superior modern talent provides a dramatic fabric in which equal purity of spirit, romance of atmosphere, and beauty of feeling are displayed in a better way and in accordance with prosaic probability, "Ingomar" ought always to receive a cordial welcome.

"COLINETTE."

On April 10, 1899, Miss Marlowe appeared at the Knickerbocker Theatre, acting the chief part in a drama called "Colinette," which had been translated and adapted for her use from a French original, and in her performance of its heroine she captured the public sympathy and approval, equally by her buoyant demeanor, her woman-like tenderness, and her decisive dramatic skill. The play tells a romantic story, by means of

expeditious action, and, as a fabric of romance, it possesses unusual charm. It was written by MM. Lenotre and Martin, and was originally produced at the Odéon Theatre, Paris, in 1898. The English version was made by the late Henry Guy Carleton, and it was made well—being carefully and smoothly written—and, as presented by Miss Marlowe and her associates, its dramatic value was enforced with brilliant ability and excellent effect.

The scene is laid in France, immediately on the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, after Waterloo, and the story implicates a whimsical French monarch, a licentious and crafty chief of police, and an imperial officer and his merry, capricious, affectionate wife, together with various persons of minor moment, all of whom are deftly tangled in a web of intrigue which is partly amatory and partly political. The officer, in striving to save the life of a friend, drifts into serious peril,—becoming involved in a Bonapartist conspiracy against *King Louis the Eighteenth*, and liable to be executed for treason. The wife proves herself to be capable not only of fascination but of heroism. The *King* is made to arrange one of those merry plots for which, in English history, King James the First was remarkable, and an escape is planned, for the imperilled officer, which resembles that of the Earl of Nithsdale, who, by the aid of his intrepid, ingenious wife, fled from the Tower of London, in the reign of King George the

First, disguised as a woman. The *King*, on being supplicated by the lady to spare her husband's life, fancies that he would like to see her in male attire, and therefore he drops a hint, which he surmises will be taken, as to the adoption of disguises by herself and her husband, and thereafter he intercepts them in their flight and so accomplishes his mischievous though kindly purpose. The wicked minister is discomfited, and there is a happy close to a season of danger and suspense. Julia Marlowe, as *Colinette*, passing with delightful ease from roguish humor to melting tenderness, touched the springs alike of laughter and tears, and gave a performance of singular flexibility and of exceptionally artistic grace, such as not only pleases while passing but leaves in the memory an abiding ideal of noble and lovable womanhood.

"BARBARA FRIETCHIE."

The fiction that the slogan of the MacGregor was heard, far off, by a Scottish lass at Lucknow, just before the relief, prompted Dion Boucicault to write his capital drama of "Jessie Brown," which was a great success in its day and still is pleasurable remembered. The fiction that an old woman displayed the National flag in Fredericktown and adjured the victorious Confederates to shoot her gray head rather than to fire upon that banner prompted the late Clyde Fitch to write the play of "Barbara Frietchie," which was presented on October 23, 1899, at the Criterion Theatre,

Colinette



To

Mr. Wm. W. White

JULIA MARLOWE.
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From a Photograph.

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JULIA MARLOWE
as
Colinette, in "*Colinette*."

and in which Miss Marlowe acted the heroine not as an old woman, but as an enthusiastic, lovely girl.

The play is simpleness itself, except for a forced and artificial close. In Act First *Barbara* trifles a little with her lover, and promises to marry him, against her father's command. In Act Second she tries to make a runaway match with him, but is prevented by the tardiness of the clergyman; and she shoots and disables a soldier who is about to kill him. In Act Third she harbors him in her father's home, mortally wounded, and by her pathetic appeals and adroit management protects him from further injury. In Act Fourth, after watching all night at his chamber door, she enters the room to find him dead, and she takes a wild, despairing leave of his corpse, and repairs to a balcony, there to wave the Star-spangled Banner in the faces of her triumphant countrymen, then in arms against it, and as she does this she falls dead,—being shot by an enraged, jealous, half-crazed suitor, whose military father promptly orders the assassin to be slain. Those incidents do not bear the test of common-sense, but they are ingeniously arranged, and they are so displayed as to cause cumulative theatrical effect.

There is a touch of silliness at the beginning. The Southern character, as denoted in the two fathers, has been somewhat coarsened, for the sake of patriotic point. The ethics are mixed. A Union officer, in Act First, is made to lie, in order to connive at the escape

of a fugitive Confederate, of whose identity he is aware and with whose place of concealment he is acquainted. A Southern girl is made to promise marriage to a Northern officer, while yet the war is raging around her home. Those devices are irrational, and so is the abrupt introduction of the flag episode immediately after the deathbed,—so harshly irrational as to seem preposterous. The play was acted with exceptional ability, in most of the nineteen characters that are implicated in it. Miss Marlowe involuntarily manifested far greater dramatic powers than were essential for the elucidation of anything in the play. Her management of a colloquy of sentiment, in the First Act, was delicious. She was by turns arch, capricious, tender, passionate, and almost tragically strong. Her utterance of *Barbara's* appeal to her father, for her wounded lover's life, was spoken with exquisite beauty, and her expression of the frenzy of grief, on finding him dead, reached as great a height as is possible to spoken pathos: for the deepest sorrow is silent; it does not talk, and certainly it does not wave flags and deliver speeches from balconies.

“WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER.”

Miss Marlowe acted *Mary Tudor*, in a play entitled “When Knighthood Was In Flower,” at the Criterion Theatre, on January 14, 1901. That play is a synopsis of a crude and cumbersome novel,—a book not easily

read, because of its disjointed mechanism and its forced, artificial, bald, inflexible style, but one that has the merit of relevance to an unhackneyed historical theme, and one that contains several well contrived, striking romantic incidents. The heroine is the Princess Mary, sister of King Henry the Eighth of England. The hero is one of that monarch's favorites, Charles Brandon, Viscount of Lisle, who, after the Battle of Flodden (1514), was made Duke of Suffolk, and who privately espoused the Princess, in Paris, after the death of her husband, King Louis the Twelfth of France. There is a slight basis of fact for the play, but, practically,—and this is a merit,—its story is a fabric of fiction.

Suffolk and Mary Tudor had been lovers; both of them were remarkable for personal beauty; King Henry the Eighth had, at one time, favored a project of their marriage; the marriage of the Princess to the French King was one of mercenary policy, prompted by the subtle counsel of the Duke of Longueville; the French King was prematurely old and infirm, so that he died, aged 53, within less than three months after his wedding; Suffolk was an accomplished courtier and soldier; and King Henry was mollified as to his sister's secret marriage,—in part by the persuasions of Cardinal Wolsey,—and made to receive Suffolk and his bride and to establish them happily in an English home. The private marriage of Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor occurred in 1515. Mary died in 1534, at the age of thirty-seven;

Brandon in 1545. Not much is known about those persons, but around their shadowy figures the novelist wove his little web of fiction, and from that was deduced, in a clumsy manner, a series of theatrical scenes.

The novel, as in all such cases, is preferable to the play, and for an obvious reason: a reader sees with the eyes of the mind, a spectator with those of the body. In the one case, if the emotions are once excited, fancy repairs every discrepancy and removes every blemish; in the other, unless perfect dramatic art is made to hallow every act and word with an irresistible glamour, every improbability is conspicuous, every extravagance is emphatic, and every weakness is visible. The play, while devoid of facile art, nevertheless affords a few theatrical opportunities, and those Miss Marlowe adroitly used. Her embodiment of *Mary Tudor* crystallized into an engaging personality the attributes of authority, impetuosity, intrepidity, force of will, gay caprice alternating with tenderness, and ardent passion tempered by both sweetness and mirth. She presented a woman who loves, and who, amid enemies and perils, has the courage of her love. It seems probable that her impersonation of *Mary Tudor* exhibited her ideal of womanhood and was little, if at all, removed from a revelation of her actual self: it certainly was a winning image of feminine variety, integrity, fidelity, romantic ardor, and ingenuous charm, and that was the more remarkable because the person-

ality was revealed in association with preposterous incidents, impossible persons, a caricature of manners, and a lingual flux of folly and profanity. The triumph of a fine actress trammelled by a halting play was never more conspicuously illustrated.

In the First Act,—which displays a posture of persons and their relations to each other, and so exhibits the dilemma in which the lovers are to be perplexed, and from which, ultimately and surprisingly, they are to be liberated,—Miss Marlowe had a scene of coquetry, wherein the *Princess* entices her lover by repelling him, and in this her acting was delicious. In the Second Act she again triumphed by a tempestuous exhibition of the Tudor temper. In the Third Act the *Princess* assumes male attire, and runs away with *Brandon*, and they are captured, at Bristol, by the *King of England* in person. The manners of courts have scarcely ever been delineated in a manner so astonishing as that of Mr. Paul Kester, the author of this play. In the Fourth Act the *Princess* is attacked by the new *King of France*, just as the old one has expired, and is rescued by *Brandon*, who drops in through a wall. About twenty characters are introduced—including *King Henry*, *Queen Katharine*, *Anne Boleyn*, *Jane Seymour*, and *Wolsey*,—so that the aristocracy is well represented, and there is not one that is not a palpable caricature. Miss Marlowe's rich beauty and the exquisite sweetness of her voice—never more effective than in her embodiment

the thoughts of both the lovers, were indicated with consummate felicity. The transition from piteous weakness to desperate resolve, when *Juliet* is confronted with the alternative of exposure and abandonment or a criminal, hateful marriage, was deftly and touchingly accomplished. The gradual comprehension of *Friar Lawrence's* proposed stratagem and plan of rescue,—the face showing the action of the mind,—was intensely dramatic. An excited imagination made itself deeply felt in the soliloquy over the sleeping-draught, and there was pathos in the awakening and the subsequent suicide, in the tomb; but an impersonation of *Juliet*,—or of any other character,—should be so moulded, sustained, and expressed that it will endure scrutiny as a whole, and not in parts, and should be made so symmetrical and authoritative, the parts being harmoniously adjusted, and the whole inspirationally illumined, that it will create an absolute illusion, captivate the heart, and subjugate the mind. Miss Marlowe's *Juliet* combined physical beauty, tender sensibility, fervor, imagination, deep feeling, the capacity of passion, and some tragic force. The voice was rich, sweet, and sympathetic, though occasionally pitched too low. The countenance, —sometimes demure with coy confusion, sometimes sparkling with pleasure, sometimes ardent with emotion, and sometimes woful with grief,—lent itself readily to the expression of varied feeling, and manifested extremes of happiness and misery. The personality, on the other

hand, was involuntarily predominant, unconsciously potent, and generally mature, so that the actress, though sometimes she was merged in the character, sometimes transcended it. The truth would seem to be that, because *Juliet* is not one of the great women of Shakespeare, but, at her highest, remains only the apotheosis of amatory passion, her character and experience, although the one is lovely and the other pathetic, do not always and entirely awaken the soul, engross the active sympathy, and stimulate the practical faculties of a woman of broad nature, mature condition, and intellectual strain. Miss Marlowe, as *Juliet*, exhibited admirable art, but surpassed the *Juliet* type of womanhood; she was more massive than the ideal that she strove to embody, and her method of adapting herself to it,—a method of reserve, restraint, and colloquialism,—though skilful, and sometimes effective, did not create and sustain a complete, continuous illusion.

Sexual idolatry of one person for another,—of the male for the female, or the female for the male,—serious enough, when it occurs, as certainly it does sometimes occur in actual life, becomes pitiable, on the stage, unless the simulation of it is reinforced by an exceptionally impressive and sympathetic personality. *Count Basil*, *Claude Melnotte*, and *Ruy Blas*, abstractly considered, are capital parts, occurring in effective plays, but it is only an exceptional actor who can impersonate either of them without seeming weak and trivial. The

representative of *Romeo*, in order to convince and dominate, must possess personal fascination, must be able to diffuse a glamour of enchantment. Conventional, routine acting,—of which all practised players are readily capable,—may satisfy the business exigency of the hour, but it dispenses no charm, awakens no emotion, exerts no influence, causes no pleasurable effect, and is of no value. The lovelorn, dazed, infatuated, delirious condition of *Romeo* is a condition so fantastic to the eye of reason that the imitator of it can make it authoritatively impressive only by inherent manliness and the charm of personal captivation. He must, in substance, be a person of innate and winning importance, and, furthermore, under the conditions imposed by the tragedy, he must possess reserves of tragic power. At first and during more than a third of the play *Romeo* is spellbound and subdued. At his swift slaughter of *Tybalt* he breaks the spell, and from that point onward he lives and moves in a tumult of tragic emotion. Mr. Sothern, as *Romeo*, showed earnest purpose, professional experience, refinement, and zeal, but, in *Romeo* exactly as in *Hamlet*, it was insistently manifest that his personality lacked distinction and allurements; his manner was finical, his vocalism was hard and dry, and his method was that of strenuous, elaborate, artificial effort. No decisive aptitude for tragedy was displayed by him, in either temperament, constitution, voice, or style. In the obvious attribute of melancholy his *Romeo*



From a Photograph. In the Collection of the Author.

E. H. SOTHERN

JULIA MARLOWE

as

as

Romeo,

Juliet,

in "Romeo and Juliet."

was good, but in the crucial situations,—*Romeo's* furious onset and killing of *Tybalt* and *Romeo's* paroxysm of agony, in the *Friar's* cell,—he was merely noisy and vehement. Taking the most favorable view possible of his performance of that part, it could be rationally regarded as little more than another addition to the numerous utilitarian achievements of delusive ambition and perverted effort.

“MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.”

Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe were first seen as *Benedick* and *Beatrice* in a production of “Much Ado About Nothing” which was effected at the Knickerbocker Theatre, on November 1, 1904. In the character of *Beatrice* Miss Marlowe liberated her exuberant animal spirits, exerted a fine talent for raillery, manifested, in a sweet and ingenuous manner, feminine exultation in being admired and beloved, and showed a noble woman's passionate, splendid resentment of brutal injustice. In the character of *Benedick* Mr. Sothern personified bland good humor, whimsical gayety, and simple, honest, straightforward, manly feeling. Both of those impersonations were well conceived and well projected, and both evinced attributes of brilliancy. Mr. Sothern's performance would have been truer to the poet's conception if it had been at some times more ruminant, at some times more deliberate, at all times more elegant, and uniformly kept in the vein of light

comedy, until the climax, and if, in the speaking, it had not been marred by occasional wrong emphasis, destructive to various shades of piquant meaning.

The characters of *Benedick* and *Beatrice* are not such as immediately endear themselves to either the readers who investigate them or the actors who represent them. The comprehension of them which ensues on intimacy perceives in their depths much that is not discernible on their surface, and awakens a whole-hearted sympathy with their piquant, tantalizing, unconventional, unique personalities. Both are ardent and demonstrative with the ebullient vigor of youth. Both are prone to sarcasm. Both are self-centred in personal conceit. Both dwell in a glowing exuberance of physical sensation. Both dispense gibes, and both exult in stinging barbs of insolent wit. Neither has had any experience of the ministry of sorrow. *Beatrice*, born under "a star that danced," and destined to "speak all mirth and no matter," is so radically merry that she wakes up laughing because she has been dreaming that she has been sad. *Benedick* is "all mirth, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and what his heart thinks his tongue speaks." But both *Benedick* and *Beatrice* are sound, genuine, substantial, worthy, and sincere persons. *Benedick* is honest, brave, and noble. *Beatrice* is pure, exalted, affectionate, and true. Those mirthful antagonists, striking fire upon each other whenever they meet, are only pretenders to flippant indifference. Their

levity is superficial. The better they are known, the more they are admired.

Vigorous youth, buoyant spirits, ample fire, large, broad, fine courtesy of manner, the dash that old stagers were accustomed to call "gig," associated with personal beauty and clear, fluent, silvery elocution, are the main attributes and faculties essential to victorious acting of *Benedick* and *Beatrice*. Mr. Sothern's personality, as *Benedick*, was gossamer rather than substantial, but he showed himself possessed of the stage tradition of the part,—the tradition transmitted from, at least, the time of Charles Kemble,—and the gallant soldier that he aimed to embody was busy, voluble, intrepid, and exultant, completely satisfied with himself, and a continually disturbing force for others. The verbal warfare of *Benedick* with *Beatrice* was carried on in a sprightly way. The complacent soliloquy on marriage was judiciously spoken, with the unconscious humor of conceited sapience. The astute, dubious vigilance, the puzzled observance, and the droll mystification of *Benedick*, while he is listening to the plotters, in the Garden Scene, were made humorously characteristic and expressive. The demeanor in the scene of the challenge was appropriately resolute, and the attitude of menacing hostility was well maintained. In the Church Scene, on the contrary, the actor was dwarfed by the magnitude of the situation and the conflict of emotions aroused by it. The Church Scene of "Much Ado" will never again

be what it was, when Henry Irving and Ellen Terry illumined and glorified it, nor is it possible that Ellen Terry's impersonation of *Beatrice*,—which was incarnate archness, playing over delicious kindness and imparting all of charm that there is in the irresistible fascination of sensuous womanhood,—will ever be equalled: but Miss Marlowe's performance of *Beatrice* became, at that supreme point, exceptionally lovely, and superb in its sincerity. The great moment for *Beatrice* is that of the outrageous insult to *Hero*,—the pure, gentle, blameless girl, whom the stronger woman so entirely loves. All levity drops from *Beatrice* in an instant, and her soul springs, full saturated, to the defence of virtue and truth. Miss Marlowe's inherent personal nobility reinforced her decisive emotional power at that moment, and her demeanor was magnificent. Horror at the infamy of the accusation against *Hero* and detestation of the insensate cruelty with which it is made culminated in a piteous, furious frenzy, half despair at her helpless inability, and half the abounding passion of fierce resentment and coveted revenge. It is in situations of this kind that the genius of Miss Marlowe has been revealed, and her fine performance of *Beatrice*, particularly in the Church Scene, afforded a convincing demonstration of her peculiar aptitude for the passionate, heroic, robust characters of dramatic fiction.

"TWELFTH NIGHT."

In the production of "Twelfth Night," which was accomplished at the Knickerbocker Theatre, on November 13, 1905, Miss Marlowe gave a lovely impersonation of *Viola*; Mr. Sothern acted *Malvolio* in a correct mood of consequential gravity; and an earnest, thoughtful effort was successfully made, less by their associates than by themselves, to interpret this beautiful comedy in the right spirit of commingled poetry and humor. Miss Marlowe's temperament,—romantic, tender, passionate, yet self-contained, pensive and sad,—seems to be more harmonious with the character of *Viola* than with almost any other character in Shakespeare. *Viola* is the obverse of *Rosalind*; for, while each of them is essentially woman, *Viola* is the more spiritual, poetic, dreamlike, ideal; typifying patient devotion and the silent self-sacrifice that is prompted by perfect love. *Rosalind*, born for conquest,—brilliant, dominant, superb,—makes the first advance to *Orlando* (not an unusual course with love-stricken women in general), while *Viola* makes no endeavor to win *Orsino*, but, on the contrary, pleads for him with another woman, the fair *Olivia*, with whom he is infatuated. "She never told her love." The keynote of the character is sounded in that speech. There is not a particle of selfishness in *Viola*. Loving, and, as she thinks, loving in vain, she veils her grief beneath a sparkling exterior of simu-

lated joy and bears herself with buoyant grace,—not only exerting the charm of sentiment, but diffusing the felicity of mirth. Guileless, generous, sincere, gentle, and gay, with no attribute of morbid egotism, she is the perfection of simple loveliness.

Julia Marlowe's dark beauty, melodious and sympathetic voice, and deep feeling held in absolute control, made her sweetly actual in that part, and completely victorious. No one better knows, or more skillfully employs, transparency in acting,—the expedient of allowing a reserved emotion to reveal itself, with artistic effect, through an investiture of assumed manner. Her demeanor of apparent lightness and buoyant indifference, veiling, but not concealing, wistful sadness,—in the illuminative colloquy with *Orsino* concerning woman's love,—while not in the least lachrymose, was touchingly expressive at once of restrained passion and submissive fortitude. Her delivery of the beautiful speech about patient love's endurance was as sweetly musical in accent as it was faultless in appreciative feeling. Her note of passion, in uttering *Cesario's* apostrophe to *Olivia*,—in which *Viola* shows her own heart, while, under a disguise, she is speaking for another,—was superbly strong and true. Her consternation, when forced into the duel,—her hesitancy between assumed assurance and overwhelming trepidation,—was the perfect tremor of comic perplexity. She acted with a fine abandonment, and yet with the assured precision of

ripe experience, and she spoke pure English with the sweet English voice. Study, thought, practice, and time have done much for that actress. It is not probable that the Stage will again be adorned and illumined by such an impersonation of *Viola* as was given by Adelaide Neilson,—who was perfection in that part, and who has been dead since 1880; but while Julia Marlowe remains to play *Viola* this generation can see and enjoy a performance that is right in ideal, and symmetrical, harmonious, spirited, and cogent in execution, expressive of a lovely woman nature and worthy of its fine poetic theme.

Viola is not impelled by passion, or by sentiment, or even by curiosity. She must find a new home, and she must obtain subsistence. Her first intent is to serve *Olivia*, but that plan is rejected. She will seek service in the household of the *Duke Orsino*,—for she can sing, and speak to him in many sorts of music,—and she will hide her sex and proceed in disguise. A happy chance has saved her from the sea, and, meanwhile, the same happy chance may also have saved *Sebastian*, her brother. She will be hopeful and will go forward, and the events of her future shall be trusted to propitious time. She is a sweet, spiritual, constant woman, and she is blessed with that cheerful courage as to worldly fortune for which good women are, usually, more remarkable than men; and she is young, handsome, winning, and, unconsciously, well fitted to prove vic-

torious. After the action of the piece has opened several comical situations are devised for *Viola*, together with several situations of serious perplexity, which mostly tend to create a comic effect for the auditor. In those situations *Viola's* buoyant spirit is liberated,—her irrepressible hilarity, on being expected to play the part of a masculine lover, and her feminine flutter, when confronted with the necessity of combat, being artfully contrasted, for the sake of humorous results. The true note of the character, meanwhile, is serious. *Viola* is a woman of deep sensibility. Subtlety of perception naturally accompanies deep feeling. *Viola*, when as *Cesario* she has caught the fancy of *Olivia*, although she may view that ludicrous dilemma archly, and even with a spice of innocent mischief, feels a woman's sympathy with the emotions of her sex, and her conduct toward *Olivia* is delicate and considerate. It is only a woman intrinsically noble who can be just toward her prosperous rival in matters of the heart. That character Julia Marlowe made actual in her performance. Votaries of the theatre have seldom seen a picture as beautiful and touching as she presented when gazing on *Orsino* and listening to the song "Come Away, Death," or when she spoke the lines "She never told her love."

Mr. Sothern's impersonation of *Malvolio* was the best display of a Shakespearean character that he has given. Aptitude of temperament reinforced profes-

sional capacity. Mr. Sothern is a comedian and likewise an egotist, and *Malvolio* is an egotistical comedy part. The great and exemplary performance of it was given by Henry Irving (first in London, with Ellen Terry as *Viola*; repeated in New York November 19, 1884),—a performance showing *Malvolio* as a formidable, passionate man, strikingly eccentric, never a buffoon, but capable of acute suffering from injustice, and capable also of bitter resentment. Mr. Sothern followed that illustrious example. The character of *Malvolio* is more elaborately drawn than that of any other person in the play, and King Charles the Second had good reason for altering the title of the piece,—in his storied copy of it,—and calling it by the name of its central part. All the humor of “Twelfth Night” crystallizes around the consequential *Steward*, who, as *Olivia* truly declares, is “sick of self-love.” *Malvolio* is serious, capable, experienced, austere,—a man to prompt thought as well as laughter. He typifies indurated self-conceit. He is a narrow-minded, complacent, strutting dullard; vain, pompous, and a little crazed with the overweening sense of his personal importance. Mr. Sothern so depicted him,—acting in a vein of suitable repose, and elaborating the delineation with all needful touches of light and shade. The consistent preservation of sour austerity was the pervasive merit of his performance,—the steel chain, linking all its attributes into a rounded, continuous fabric of personality. The

design of the poet, manifestly, was to expose and rebuke a chronic frailty of human nature, and a good performance of *Malvolio* practically accomplishes, impresses, and fulfils that design. The rubicund *Sir Toby*, the silly *Sir Andrew*, the quaint clown, *Feste*,—one of the best of Shakespeare's wise fools,—the comic servant *Fabian*, and the skittish, mischievous, bouncing *Maria* unite to entrap the vain, self-deluding egotist, and to disgrace him by the deadliest of all harms, ridicule. The passage in which he is victimized, by the letter scheme, is deliciously droll, and, when well acted, it inevitably creates an effect of exuberant mirth: but its serious import and substantial value are resident in its effectual rebuke to the infirmity of self-conceit. Mr. Sothern's performance possessed an intrinsic value far transcending that of any of his efforts in tragedy. It was a thoroughly admirable achievement, needing only a little more of age, solidity, and deliberation, combined with a judicious, expressive style of dress. *Malvolio* should not wear anything yellow till he puts on the yellow stockings, and an actor who lacks height should not dwarf his figure by putting on voluminous drapery. The Letter Scene was marred by the silly transition of *Sir Toby* and his comrades from side to side of the garden.

As often as "Twelfth Night" is seen or read the enthusiast of Shakespeare muses on its unmatched excellence as an artistic composite of character, sentiment, humor, and poetry, and its decisive intimation of the

inventive faculty and affluent eloquence of a great poet. No comedy contains more of exemplary human nature, or a greater wealth of pure, sweet, delicious feeling, or a freer range and sweep of vigorous, diversified, fluent style. Its story of adventure and romantic love is continuously interesting; its flexible dialogue is delicious; its comic fable,—relative to the allurements and discomfiture of the absurd *Malvolio*,—is ingenious and irresistibly ludicrous; and its fabrics of original character are superb. *Malvolio*, *Maria*, the *Clown (Feste)*, *Sir Toby Belch*, and *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* are, exclusively, Shakespeare's creations; and, if he took *Orsino*, *Olivia*, and *Viola* out of an old romance, he completely transfigured them in the process of conveyance. The woful gloom of hopeless love has not been better portrayed than in the exposition of *Orsino's* passion for *Olivia*, nor is there, in any play, a more natural and expressive alternation of sorrow with joy and sobriety with mirth. Shakespeare's dramatic art operates, in this comedy, with an irresistibly felicitous charm of indolent, drifting ease. His touch is light. His careless mood vacillates between tenderness and joy. The scene is frequently shifted, but the changes are made smoothly and in a natural sequence. The breezy style varies from verse to prose and from prose to verse but always in harmony with the changes of theme. The two households,—one of *Orsino*, the other of *Olivia*,—are deftly suggested and made clearly pictorial of diversified, interesting char-

acter and representative experience. Over both the houses there is an air of opulence, romance, and poetry, and yet of modernity and fact. In the palace of *Orsino* that prince is suffering from the melancholy of hopeless love. In the hall of *Olivia* that cloistered beauty is suffering from grief for her dead brother and father. At the side of *Orsino* stands the disguised *Viola*,—love-lorn for her master's favor. At the side of *Olivia* stands the saturnine, self-worshipful *Malvolio*, nursing his conceit that the great lady may yet become his wife. Around those serious figures eddy the vinous revels of stout *Sir Toby Belch*, the puling capers of vapid *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, the antics of mischievous *Maria*, and the romance of the mystified *Sebastian*. It is a picture in little of the way of all things. Love is blind and will not see its own comfort, which is close at hand. Self-opinion makes itself a fool, and comes, amid inextinguishable laughter, to utter disgrace. Frolic and revel sparkle, for a moment, and turn to nothing; irrational Fortune scatters her favors wholly without logic; truth and devotion are rewarded by chance; and motley smiles over all. The comedy is a profusion of wild flowers—a medley of whimsicality, drollery, sentiment, and grace, with abundance in it of kindly satire and genial philosophy, to make it enjoyable while it is passing and to enshrine it in loving remembrance after it has gone.

"JOHN THE BAPTIST."

Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe appeared on January 21, 1907, at the Lyric Theatre, in an English version of the German play of "Johannes," by Hermann Sudermann. The English version, called "John the Baptist," is comprised in six acts, and about forty persons are implicated in its colloquies. The prominent characters are *John*, *Salome*, *Herodias*, and *Herod Antipas*. Most of the essential dialogue passes among those four speakers, and all of the essential action might readily be comprised within two or three scenes. The interlocutors, in general, are explanatory feeders. Among them they contrive to make it known that *Herodias*, *Philip's* wife, has run away from *Philip*, with their daughter *Salome*, in order to marry *Philip's* brother, *Herod*, Tetrarch of Galilee, and that the Hebrew population of Jerusalem, or some part of it, led by *John the Baptist*, is disgusted with that matrimonial alliance and is incensed against the Tetrarch for making it. On that basis of circumstance the movement, such as it is, proceeds. It is confused and slow.

John, in particular,—who thinks that he has been commissioned to regulate all things, punish all sinners, and "guide with a rod of iron,"—objects to the Tetrarch's second-hand nuptials, and, on being privily brought into the presence of *Salome* and *Herodias*, he frees his mind in explicit language, snubs the daughter,

and defies the mother: "Harlot is your name," he remarks, to *Herodias*, "and adulteress stands written on your forehead." One of those females, however, is secretly enamoured of *John* (a fact the more remarkable since, manifestly, the prophet is ignorant of the use of soap), while both are conscious of a mysterious, commanding power in him; for which reason, although *Herodias* nearly explodes with fury, he is allowed to depart unharmed. Soon afterward *Herod* and his bride appear in public, and the Hebrew mob, rallying round *John*, undertakes to pelt them with stones; but *John*, who has just heard that he ought to love his enemies, falters at the crisis, drops his missile, and is arrested and put in jail. There *Salome* privately visits the saint, and astounds him with such freedom of speech as might startle even a veteran sinner. "I have stolen into the twilight," says that peculiar young woman, "to seek thy face and the light of thy eyes. I have made my couch lovely with many-colored tapestries of Egypt. I have strewn it with myrtle, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us wait on love till the morn. My companions shall watch on the threshold, and greet the dawn with their harps." This proves to be too much for the saintly patience. "Thou art sin," says *John*, "go 'way!" And *Salome* goes—mad as a hornet, and more dangerous. That is the only really dramatic point in the play.

Intimation has been conveyed that *Uncle Herod*,—who, like old *Gobbo*, "doth something smack,"—has cast

his thoughtful eye upon the budding charms of young *Salome*, and that appreciative damsel, noticing this, has caused her fond mother "grave uneasiness" by encouraging the old Tetrarch with expressive glances. The rest is easy. The two women (whether they understand each other or not, and presumably they do) now have, practically, a common ground of malevolence. *Herodias* beguiles *Herod*. A saltatory entertainment is devised. *Salome* demurely assumes an air of vestal innocence, the better to exert a completely infernal fascination, and the head of the unfortunate *John* is purchased,—according to clear denotement,—with the body of that feline wench. An effort is made, incidentally, to swathe this odoriferous theme with a mystical, religious atmosphere, to make it impressive by an investiture of dusky ravines and dimly lighted wastes of barren, rocky land, and to disguise a dishevelled fabric of prurience and fanaticism by suggestion of a haunted environment. *John* is displayed as hearing voices and the flapping of wings, and as being forever in expectation of somebody who is "coming"—like "the Campbells" in the old song; but that extraneous embellishment is extremely thin, for *John's* alternations of forlorn bewilderment and rhapsodical ecstasy—intrinsically and apart from Mr. Sothern's occasionally felicitous display of them—are only suggestive of pitiable or ludicrous dementia, while, aside from two or three verbose denunciatory speeches, most of his remarks have no more relevance to the

subject of the play than those of the old woman in "David Copperfield," who, at long intervals and without ostensible reason, declares that "there's mile-stones on the Dover road."

The drift and substance, accordingly, of this repulsive drama,—which is loose in its joints and written in a flabby, disordered, moon-struck style,—can be denoted in a few words. All its preparation, which is laborious, protracted, and exceedingly tiresome, leads to a situation in which a wanton woman can perform a lascivious dance, in the presence of a lewd despot, in order to inflame his passions and so entirely to enslave him that he will become a rabid monster of lust and cruelty, and, in that loathsome and frightful condition, will authorize and permit a barbarous murder, for the gratification of the woman's bloodthirsty hatred. The despot, *Herod*, is the old, familiar type of imperial brute with which ancient history teems. The dancing woman, *Salome*, is an incipient drab of the most detestable order, being not only libidinous, but ferocious, crafty, malignant, and cruel, beneath an exterior of ingenuous sweetness and girlish grace. The victim is the half-crazed fanatic, *John*. That crack-brained rantipole (for such he is, in the drama, and nothing else) has contemptuously repulsed the advances of the salacious *Salome*, and, as a consequence, has incurred her implacable resentment and hideous animosity. *Salome's* dance is the prelude to her demand for the head of *John*, served upon a

golden dish (called, in Matthew xiv, 8, where the incident is found, "a charger"). To augment the horror of the whole detestable situation, the play shows *Herodias*,—mother of *Salome* and adulterous and incestuous wife of *Herod*,—as subtly intimating that her husband may also possess her daughter, and as planning her daughter's particular form of revenge and prompting her to its fulfilment. The drama contains two or three situations in which actors can show their skill, but all that a spectator can derive from a sight of "John the Baptist" is illustrative confirmation (which nobody needs) of Congreve's always misquoted couplet:

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned."

That being all, this drama cannot be deemed creditable to either the author who made it or the actors who produced it. There is, or should be, no place in art for the exposition of amatory mania or the analysis of bestial propensity. No influence could be more pernicious than one that augments consideration, already excessive, of overfreighted animal instincts and low sensual pursuits. Society hears too much about "love" and too little about things that are far more important—namely, justice, duty, and honor. "John the Baptist" is a radically immoral play, notwithstanding its elaborate sanctimonious trappings of pious pretence, and

the better it is acted the more harm it will always do—by directing the general mind upon evil imagery. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe produced it with an ample and judicious cast and with picturesque scenery, and their interpretation of it was earnest, vital, vigorous, replete with warmth and color, and well calculated to blind judgment as to its actual character. As an actor, Mr. Sothern, playing *John*, appeared in it to uncommon advantage, for his ideal of the ascetic enthusiast was imaginative, and his portrayal of that ideal, though marred at supreme moments of invective by puny and finical gesture, was fraught with sincerity, authority, and the requisite wild fervor of religious delirium. He lacked height to be invariably imposing, and his zeal, though ardent and sustained, while it elevated the prophet, did not dignify the prophet's chattering lunes: but Mr. Sothern especially succeeded in conveying a pathetic impression of a haunted, disordered mind, now exultant in ecstatic certainty of divine ordination, and now darkly vacillant and forlorn in a mist of doubt. Gibbon, in that magnificent chapter of his great history which describes the hermits and anchorets of early Christianity, happily designates those ascetics as persons who "obeyed and abused the precepts of the Gospel" and were "inspired by the savage enthusiasm that represents God as a tyrant and man as a criminal." That, substantially, is the character of *John*, as indicated by Mr. Sudermann and shown by Mr. Sothern.

It was not for *John*, however, that the play was made, but for *Salome*. Mr. Sudermann's mind runs toward abnormal and odious themes, and it was natural that he should select this one, long a favorite with morbid votaries as well of the brush as of the pen. Miss Marlowe, in her embodiment of *Salome*, appeared to suppose that she was presenting a lovely, alluring, unsophisticated young woman, inclined indeed to coquetry,—though not more so than is natural and usual with all pretty girls,—and innocent of evil purpose. At all events, the actress suffused her impersonation with an arch, demure, pouting, bland, childlike simplicity, and, while showing *Salome* as a handsome young animal, without either heart or conscience, but exultant in the sensuous enjoyment of abounding physical life, contrived to make the girl appear both piquant and romantic. Much of that result was due to the personal charm of the actress—her dark eyes, rich voice, and romantic aspect, at once bright and sad. With her, as it does with others, personality operated, independently of art. The art, nevertheless, was present, and it was nothing less than wicked in the application of its proficiency. The character, being that of a carnal wanton, without sense of iniquity or capability of shame, ought not for a moment to entice sympathy or command admiration; yet her audiences were blinded to its depravity and captivated by its grace, because of a soft allurement, involuntary in the actress, that made it irresistibly sympathetic.

Some of the speeches made by this girl are so salacious as to be shocking: "I am not afraid of any man" (so runs the current of her remarks); "they please me just as they are." . . . "I am not displeasing to my uncle Herod. I have noticed that he casts sly glances at me. When my mother scolds me, I know how to vex her." . . . "I am a flower of Sharon and a rose in the valley. If my beloved comes not into his garden and eats not of—" . . . "You wild man from the deserts of Judea, the hatred flashed from your eyes will not consume *me*. I will kindle another fire in them, lovely and mournful, like my dreams, when the perfume of the narcissus is shed around my head at night." There is much more of the same kind of erotic fustian, but, as spoken by Miss Marlowe, it sounded like poetry. The careless avowal of *Salome* that she has had her waiting woman murdered, from mere caprice of jealousy, caused no abhorrence. Her delight in the idea of demanding *John's* head, as the price of her dance, though grisly and hideous, caused no shudder. "I will glow above him," she says, "like a cluster of ripening grapes." The dance, at the close, for so large and solid a woman, was surprisingly graceful. The idea is that the dancer shall perform a series of gyrations, becoming more and more voluptuous, till, having cast aside, one by one, no less than seven veils, she drops before *Herod*, with the upper part of her person naked. That was not literally done, but it might just as well



From Photographs by White, N. Y.

E. H. SOTIERN

as

John,

in "John the Baptist."



In the Collection of Louis V. DeFoe, Esq.

JULIA MARLOWE

as

Salome,

have been, for the literal effect was produced: and thereafter *John* is led forth to be slain, and *Salome* rushes after him, supposedly to continue her dance, with his head on a dish,—from which charming exercise she staggers in and collapses in a faint. The exhibition, essentially, was barbarous and loathsome. Miss Marlowe showed remarkable skill in her management of it, and vindicated her art although she could not redeem the horror of her subject.

REDEEMING GRACE.

Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe having, in their pious souls, been deeply moved by the irreverence, not to say the levity, with which their sacrificial presentment of Herr Sudermann's sweet-scented Biblical drama of "John the Baptist" was received, in some directions, presently trickled into print to explain and vindicate their design in producing that trash. Those missionaries of morality, revealing a copious reserve of religious zeal,—not till then suspected,—had made discoveries of extraordinary value. Miss Marlowe's Biblical researches, for example, had enabled her to ascertain that *Salome* was merely a naughty child, a sweet young thing, who, approaching *John the Baptist* with a verbal tender of her "young body," was only "on the anxious seat," and desirous to learn about "the second birth," while Mr. Sothern's explorations of Scripture and Sudermann had determined that *Salome* and *John* are the celestial

bearers of "a message of love," commissioned to instruct the community that love is "not altogether a lascivious and sensual matter," but really a good thing. That being the case, it became obvious that a great day had dawned for the play-going public,—a benighted herd of lost and wandering sheep, greatly requiring to be enfolded, instructed, and made to understand what "love" is, and what a blessed privilege it could command in having Herr Sudermann, Mr. Sothern, and Miss Marlowe to enforce the new truth that "*love* is not altogether sensual." Silence, in the presence of such a sacred opportunity, would have been cruel. Mr. Sothern had faltered a little, fearing that the multitude was not quite sufficiently enlightened to receive and absorb the celestial benefits that he and the gracious Miss Marlowe were wishful to bestow, but several clergymen in Pittsburgh,—that stronghold of holiness,—had encouraged him to persevere, to hope for better things, and he would not be daunted in the good work. "This love matter," he asseverated, ought really "to be explained," and there was no place as good as the Theatre for the preaching of sermons. He declared (generous soul!) that he would preach them, and that Miss Marlowe likewise would exhort the populace,—she too having received a light from on high. Mr. Sothern did not disguise the opinion that Miss Marlowe's *Salome* dance was, perhaps, a little middle-aged as a saltatory feat, but he deemed it an edifying performance and calcu-

lated to do wonders in the service of morality; and finally he avowed (and in this he was not far wrong) that after you had seen "John" a few times you would feel that it is as "natural as an exposition of a man 'swatting' you in the eye." These little gems of thought which actors contribute to the public information are useful in many ways, especially as side-lights upon the mental condition of their authors.

The singular conduct of Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe, in producing such a concoction as "John the Baptist," and the still more singular remarks that they subsequently published concerning it afford a notable episode in theatrical history on which a word of serious comment is justifiable and necessary. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe are elderly persons. They arrived long ago at the age of discretion. They knew perfectly well the value of all that they do and say on the stage. They knew that the play of "John the Baptist" depends on a lascivious dance. They knew that it is an immoral play, despite its pretence of religious import. They knew that, if they knew anything. Their pretence on the subject was humbug. Extenuation of the character of *Salome* is about as sensible,—and they were perfectly well aware of it,—as the extenuation was that was attempted of Mrs. Brownrigg, the murderer, in London, of whom Canning wrote, in the "Anti-Jacobin," in his satirical elegy, that

"She whipped two female 'prentices to death,
And hid them in the coal-hole."

WHITEWASH.

"How can any one think that the Salomé of Sudermann is shocking? . . . When for the first time she dances before men her one motive, her one desire, is to please Herod and his guests by doing her prettiest. Like most girls, she has eyes for men. . . . She doesn't believe that John will lose his head. Her only purpose is to make him realize her power—to be able to save the man who has scorned her. . . . She wishes to learn. . . ."—JULIA MARLOWE.

I.

Gracious Julia, weary nations
Long have waited for the day
When from tarnished reputations
All the "tar" should drop away:
Now at last it comes, in glory,
Proudly ushered in by you,
With the wrecks of ancient story
All made over, "good as new."

II.

Hitherto considered grim and
Subject only for police,
Sweet Salomé, full of whim and
Girlish, gay, demure caprice,
Rectified by you, emerges
White as Mary's little lamb,
And, made cleanly by your purge, is
Blameless as the peaceful clam.

III.

Never since Eve ate the apple
 Was there such a need abroad
 For a valiant mind to grapple
 With the immemorial fraud—
 Fraud that smirches fair Brinvilliers
 And withholds the verdant bays
 That would otherwise be still yours,
 Chaste and virtuous Katy Hayes!

IV.

Falter not in your grand mission!
 Gracious Julia, oh, be strong!
 Hauling up from their perdition
 Saintly souls who've suffered long:—
 Good old Cenci, tender father,
 Much inclined to playful whim,
 And great Valentinian, rather
 Prone to jokes mistelling him.

V.

Messalina, blithe Lucrécia,
 Whom so much we ought to rue,—
 Beauties of the ancient Géisha,—
 And old Torquemada, too,
 Jezebel and poor Uriah's
 Pretty wife—they're all your own,
 And, to surfeit your desires,
 There's the Queen of Naples, Joan.

VI.

But, O, Julia! gracious Julia!
 Please consider for a while
 That your sentiments peculiar
 Cause your cynic friend to smile:

And, although you are "a corker,"
With your many lovely lures,
He must gently murmur "Walker"!
When he hears such talk as yours.

"THE SUNKEN BELL."

In the fantastic composition called "The Sunken Bell," which was resuscitated at the Lyric Theatre, on February 5, 1907 (Mr. Sothern first produced that play at the Knickerbocker Theatre, March 26, 1900, with Virginia Harned—then Mrs. Sothern,—as *Rautendelein*), Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe impersonated characters that typify, or seem to do so, spiritual aspiration, on the one hand, and joyous physical vitality of all the appetites, on the other. The piece is a theatrical allegory, and by some judges it is thought to be freighted with prodigious meaning. To the uninitiated observer it appears to glance at human life as a struggle between good and evil, or else between vulgar commonplace and celestial desire, and to mean,—in as far as it can be understood to mean anything,—that the struggle is, necessarily and inevitably, attended by trouble and terminated by disappointment and misery. Viewed as an allegory it probably possesses intense, tremulous, absorbing interest for persons who yearn, gurgitate, and gaze fixedly into space, listening meanwhile to the whir of cerebral wheels; persons who are dissatisfied with themselves and everything around them; persons who are convinced that the universe ought to be made over, on

a new plan; that property ought to be divided among the populace every Saturday night; and, especially, that "love" ought to be relieved of the extremely inconvenient shackles with which, at present, in civilized society, its proceedings are—to a slight extent—impeded.

As a play, "The Sunken Bell" is a dreary, foggy, puerile exposition of the discontent that is naturally sequent on an ill-assorted marriage. *Heinrich* and *Magda*, husband and wife, resident in a mountainous region populated with bovine inhabitants who subsist on goat's milk and talk platitude, are inharmonious. *Heinrich's* head is in the clouds, while *Magda's* mental apparatus confines itself to the pantry. *Rautendelein*, an elfin person, encourages *Heinrich* to revolt against prosaic circumstances and to ascend aerial stairs. The result is a domestic catastrophe and general disintegration. Mr. Sothern played *Heinrich* and Miss Marlowe played the alluring *Elf*, and both of them contributed to a considerable waste of time. All that the actors in Sudermann's fabrication contrived to convey could have been said in ten minutes, if Miss Marlowe, with her sweet voice and earnest delivery, would have recited Longfellow's poem of "Excelsior." The admirers of Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe, naturally, could not repress a feeling of regret that those fortunate players, so rich in opportunity, should have turned aside from their right path to exploit such flatulent authors as Sudermann, Hauptmann and Rapagnetta of the Annun-

ciation, and become the servants of Fad and the apostles of Fudge.

In the complex, obscure, inscrutable medley of trite domestic detail, fairy pranks, and transcendental flummery called "The Sunken Bell" both of them acted with a sincerity that was almost pathetic, considering the frequently ludicrous situations that they were compelled to animate and the interminable strains of versified fustian that they were compelled to deliver. Miss Marlowe was uncommonly beautiful to see and sweetly melodious to hear, although often no listener could understand what she said or what she was talking about. The special merit of her performance was its suggestive impartment of a dryad joy and freedom. Mr. Sothern created a brilliant dramatic effect, for one fleeting moment, when the death-stricken *Heinrich* is caused, in the scene of delirium in his home, to leap into sudden and abounding health: and his delivery of a long rhythmical oration on life, death, and immortality, together with contingent remainders, was marked by fine breadth of gesture and authority of enunciation. The scenery was handsome. There was a prodigious cataract, which, however, had the fairy-like quality of making no sound.

GLOSSARY OF "THE SUNKEN BELL."

From the Sothern-Marlowe Playbill.

Being notes, suggesting the interpretation of the characters as wrought out by Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern:

HEINRICH.

"Typifying Human Aspiration, strives for the Liberation of the Soul from Formalism at its Best and Worst."

MAGDA.

"Typifying Formalism at its best, strives against Him."

THEIR CHILDREN.

"Typifying the Most Potent and Subtle Weapons of Formalism at its Best, give Him his Death Wounds."

THE VICAR—THE SCHOOLMASTER—THE BARBER.

"Typifying Formalism at its worst, war against, but cannot conquer Him."

OLD WITTIKIN.

"Typifying Philosophy, weakens Him by warring against neither Him nor Them that war against Him."

RAUTENDELEIN.

"Typifying the Freedom of the Soul; appears to Him as a Vision and lends Him Strength for his Conflict."

THE NICKELMANN.

"Typifying Ancient Skepticism, wars against Him by Recurring Attempts to take Her from Him."

THE WOOD SPRITE.

"Typifying Fleshly Lust, wars against Him by unremitting efforts to enthrall Her."

THE FAIRIES.

"Typifying the Fleeting Beauty of Nature, weaken Him by lulling Him to Rest in lieu of awakening Him to Action."

THE TROLLS.

"Typifying the Permanent Ugly Forces of Nature, weaken Him by compelling Him to wage Useless Battle against Them."

THE VILLAGERS.

"Typifying the Familiar Environment of Formalism, weaken Him by their inability to support Magda in her Hour of Unwonted Trial."

"The story illustrates the efforts of a bell founder, an artist who has lived and worked with contentment in the valleys, and who is moved to attempt a masterpiece which shall ring forth gloriously on the heights of life. His effort fails; the great bell he has cast, during the labor of raising it high above, where its clear tones will be heard far and wide, breaks away from those who are moving it up the mountainside and falls to the bottom of the lake. Crushed though the artist is by the catastrophe, he finds new health and strength in the love of a beautiful spirit of the mountains, for whom he forgets wife, children, and the lowly duties of the vale. He dreams of a splendid temple he will build on the heights for a worship that shall free and not enslave mankind. But lacking the firm basis of duty his art fails him, and when he seeks consolation in the love of the beautiful spirit that awoke him to the higher ideal, remorse (typified by the sound of the sunken bell, rung by the dead wife) overpowers and paralyzes him. The phantom forms of his two children appear to him toiling painfully up the mountainside, and, conscience-stricken, he casts off and flees from the 'elfin creature.' *Heinrich*, the bell founder, the part played by Mr. Sothern, is a symbol of humanity, struggling painfully toward the realiza-

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tion of its dream of the ideal truth and joy and light and justice. *Rautendelein*, the part played by Miss Marlowe, stands for nature, or rather for the freedom and sincerity of nature, missing a reunion with which Humanity can never hope to reach the supreme truth and the supreme bliss of which the sun is the emblem."

Most readers will, I think, agree that drama and acting which require diagrams, charts, blue-prints, foot-notes, etc., are bad art and a long way from "the purpose of playing."

III.

ADA REHAN.

1860—19—.

*“Thou foole!’ said Love, ‘know’st thou not this—
In everything that’s sweet she is!
In yond carnation goe and seek,
There shalt thou find her lip and cheek;
In that enamel’d pansie by,
There shalt thou have her curious eye;
In bloom of peach and rose’s bud,
There waves the streamer of her blood.’
‘Tis true,’ said I, and thereupon
I went to pluck them, one by one.”*

—HERRICK.

IN musing over the fragrant, evergreen pages of Cibber’s delightful “Apology,” and especially in reflecting upon the beautiful and brilliant women who, drawn by his expert pen, dwell there, perpetual, in life, color, and charm, the reflective reader may perhaps be prompted to remember that the royal line of stage beauties is not extinct, and that stage heroines exist in the present day who are quite as well worthy of commemoration as any that graced the period of King Charles the Second or of good Queen Anne. Our age,

indeed, has no Cibber to describe their loveliness and celebrate their achievements,—but surely, if he were living at this hour, that clever, characteristic, sensuous writer, who saw so clearly and could portray so well the peculiarities of the feminine nature, would not deem the period of Ellen Terry, Marie Wilton, Ada Rehan, Mary Anderson, Sarah Bernhardt, Genevieve Ward, Clara Morris, Jane Hading, Blanche Bates, and Julia Marlowe unworthy of his pen. As often as fancy ranges over those bright names and others that are kindred with them,—a glittering sisterhood of charms and talents,—the regret must arise that no literary artist with the gallantry, susceptibility, and sensuous appreciation, the insight, and the pictorial touch of old Cibber is extant to perpetuate their glory. The hand that sketched Elizabeth Barry so as to make her live forever in a few brief lines, the hand that drew the informing portrait of Susanna Mountfort (“Down goes her dainty diving body to the ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious load of her own attractions”),—what might it not have done to preserve for the knowledge of future generations the queens of the Theatre who are crowned and regnant to-day! Cibber could have caught and reflected the elusive charm of Ada Rehan. No touch less adroit and felicitous than his can accomplish more than the suggestion of her peculiar allurements, her originality, and her enchanting, because sympathetic and piquant, mental and physical characteristics.

Ada Rehan, born at Limerick, Ireland, on April 22, 1860, was brought to America when five years old, and in girlhood she lived and went to school in Brooklyn. No one of her progenitors was ever on the stage, nor does it appear that she was predisposed to that vocation by early reading or training. Her elder sisters had adopted that pursuit, and perhaps she was impelled toward it by the force of example and domestic association, readily affecting her innate latent faculty for the dramatic art. Her first appearance on the stage was made at Newark, New Jersey, in 1873, in a play entitled "Across the Continent," in which she acted a small part, named *Clara*, for one night only, to fill the place of a performer who had been suddenly disabled by illness. Her readiness and her positive talent were clearly revealed in that effort, and it was thereupon determined, in a family council, that she should proceed, and she was soon regularly embarked on the life of an actress. Her first appearance on the New York Stage was made in 1873, at Wood's Museum, when she played a small part in a piece called "Thorough-bred." During the seasons of 1873-'74-'75 she was associated with the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia,—that being her first regular professional engagement. (John Drew, with whom, in the theatre, Ada Rehan, in after years, was long associated, made his first appearance in the same season at the same house.) She then went to Macaulay's Theatre, Louisville, where she acted for one

season. From Louisville she went to Albany, as a member of John W. Albaugh's company, and with that manager she remained two seasons, acting sometimes in Albany and sometimes in Baltimore. After that she was associated for a short time with Fanny Davenport. The earlier part of her career involved professional endeavors in company with the wandering stars, and she acted, in a variety of plays, with Edwin Booth, Adelaide Neilson, John McCullough, Mrs. Bowers, Lawrence Barrett, John Brougham, Edwin Adams, Mrs. Lander, and John T. Raymond.

From the first Miss Rehan was fond of Shakespeare, and all the Shakespearean characters allotted to her were studied and acted by her with eager interest and sympathy. While thus employed in the provincial stock she acted *Ophelia*, *Cordelia*, *Desdemona*, *Celia*, *Olivia*, and *Lady Anne*, and in each of those parts she was conspicuously good. The attention of Augustin Daly was first attracted to her in December, 1877, when she was acting at Albaugh's Theatre in Albany, the play being "Katharine and Petruchio" (Garrick's version of "The Taming of the Shrew"), in which she was playing *Bianca*; and subsequently Daly again remarked her as an actress of auspicious distinction at the Grand Opera House, New York, in April, 1879. Fanny Davenport was then acting in that theatre, in Daly's strong play of "Pique," and Ada Rehan appeared in it as *Mary Standish*. She was immediately engaged under Daly's man-

for Scandal," which was forty-nine times repeated, and "The Country Girl." On January 8, 1894, Miss Rehan there acted *Viola*, a part which she had first assumed on February 21, 1893, in New York. Her personation of *Viola* was cordially liked in London, and "Twelfth Night," when thus presented there, was performed 111 times, completely thawing the ice of social reserve, dispelling the constraint of critical reluctance, and establishing the success of the new house beyond dispute. The London season was closed with "As You Like It," on May 5, 1894, Miss Rehan, as *Rosalind*, then giving the performance which proved to be her last in the London Daly's Theatre. In the following August she returned to New York, where she acted, at Daly's Theatre, in various plays, throughout the ensuing theatrical season, which lasted till April 20, 1895. On February 25, that year, she had appeared as *Julia*, in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," which, then revived by Daly, was acted for the first time in New York since 1846. During her season of 1895-'96, which began on September 23, 1895, in Chicago, she appeared in many cities of America, acting various parts. In January, 1896, she added to her repertory the part of *Countess Gucki*, in a play of the same name. In July that year she filled a six weeks' engagement at the Comedy Theatre, London, in "The Countess Gucki" and "Love on Crutches." She then returned to America and, on December 23, at Daly's Theatre, she for the first time acted

Beatrice, in "Much Ado About Nothing." On March 12, 1897, Daly produced a play by Robert W. Chambers, called "The Witch of Ellangowan," founded on the novel of "Guy Mannering," and Miss Rehan appeared as *Meg Merrilies*. On April 6 Shakespeare's lovely comedy of "The Tempest" was presented at Daly's Theatre, but it was not till the afternoon of April 20 that Miss Rehan appeared as *Miranda*.

In August, 1897, Miss Rehan and her associates in Daly's Company appeared at Stratford-upon-Avon, giving a performance of "As You Like It" for the benefit of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. The actress was then made one of the life governors of that institution. A tour of England and Scotland was next accomplished, and in October Miss Rehan acted at the old Grand Theatre, Islington, afterward destroyed by fire: that was her last professional appearance in London. On November 29, 1897, she reappeared at Daly's Theatre, New York. The regular dramatic company acted there, sometimes alternating with a musical company in "The Geisha," for many weeks: the season of 1897-'98 was closed with a tour, which ended, in Chicago, June 4. In the fall of 1898 Daly produced, at Philadelphia, an English adaptation of "Cyrano de Bergerac," and Miss Rehan appeared in it, as *Roxane*, —Charles Richman playing *Cyrano* and Jefferson Winter *Christian*. On November 19, 1898, Daly produced "The Merchant of Venice," and Miss Rehan appeared

for the first time as *Portia*—Sidney Herbert acting *Shylock*. On January 3, 1899, she acted *Madame Sans Gêne*, in the play of that name, and on February 9 she appeared as *Lady Garnet*, in "The Great Ruby," the last part she acted under the management of Augustin Daly. She withdrew from the cast of that play early in May, and on the 13th, in company with Daly and Mrs. Daly, sailed for England. Daly died in Paris, June 7, and the more important part of Ada Rehan's public life then ended. She subsequently returned to the stage and acted in selections from her repertory. In 1900-'01 she appeared, beginning at Buffalo, November 26, in a new play, by Mr. Paul Kester, entitled "Sweet Nell of Old Drury," and on December 31 she reappeared in New York, in that play, at the Knickerbocker Theatre. In 1903 she revived "The Taming of the Shrew" and other plays of her repertory and, in association with that excellent actor Otis Skinner, made a tour of the country, coming to the Lyric Theatre, New York, on January 18, 1904. In 1904-'05 she continued to present a few of her old plays—Charles Richman appearing as her leading man. Her last appearance was made at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on May 2, 1905, when she participated in the Testimonial Performance given for the benefit of Helena Modjeska.

That is an outline of Ada Rehan's professional story; but how little of the real life of an actor can be



From a Photograph by Aimé Dupont. In the Collection of the Author.

ADA REHAN.

imparted in a record of the surface facts of a public career! There was deep feeling beneath the luminous and sparkling surface of her art, but it was chiefly with mirth that she touched the public heart and affected the public experience. In a civilization and at a period wherein persons are customarily accepted for what they pretend to be, instead of being seen and understood for what they are, she was content to take an unpretentious course, to be original and simple, and thus to allow her faculties to ripen and her character to develop in their natural manner. She did not at once assume the position of a star, and perhaps the American community, although favorable and friendly toward her, was slow to understand her unique personality and her superlative worth. The moment a thoughtful observer's attention is called to the fact, however, he perceives how large a place Ada Rehan has filled in the public mind, how conspicuous a figure she was on the contemporary Stage, and how difficult it is to explain and classify her, whether as an artist or a woman. That blending of complexity with transparency always imparts to individual life a tinge of piquant interest, because it is one denotement of the temperament of genius.

The poets of the world pour themselves through all subjects by the use of their own words. In what manner they are affected by the forces of nature,—its influences of gentleness, beauty, and peace, or its pageants of majesty and terror,—those words denote; and also

those words indicate the action, upon their responsive spirits, of the passions that agitate the human heart. The actors, on the other hand, assuming to be the interpreters of the poets, must pour themselves through all subjects by the use of their personalities. They are to be estimated, accordingly, by whatever the competent observer is able to perceive of the nature and the faculties they reveal under the stress of emotion, whether tragic or comic. Perhaps it is not possible,—mind being limited in its function,—for any person to form an absolutely full, true, and definite summary of another human creature. To view a dramatic performance with a consciousness of the necessity of forming a judicial opinion of it is often to see the self-conscious observer's thought about it rather than the thing itself. Yet all allowance being made for difficulty of theme and for infirmity of judgment, the observer of Ada Rehan could surely conclude that she possessed a rich, tender, sparkling nature, in which the dream-like quality of sentiment and the discursive faculty of imagination,—intimately blended with deep, broad, accurate perceptions of the actual, and with a fund of keen, sagacious sense,—were reinforced by strong individuality and by affluent and extraordinary vital force. She was not a slave to traditions. She went to the Stage not because of vanity but because of spontaneous impulse, and for the expression of every part that she played she went to Nature and not to precept and precedent. The stamp of her

personality was distinct upon every part that she played; yet the thinker who looks back upon her numerous and various impersonations is astonished at their diversity. The romance, sorrow, and fortitude of *Kate Verity*, the impetuous passion of *Katharine*, the brilliant raillery of *Hippolyta*, the sweet candor and lovely innocence of *Miranda*, the sparkling vitality of *Beatrice*, the enchanting womanhood of *Rosalind*—how clear-cut, how distinct, how absolutely dramatic was each one of those personifications, and yet how completely characteristic each one was of the actress herself! Our works of art may be subject to the application of our knowledge and skill, but we ourselves are under the dominance of laws which operate out of the inaccessible and indefinable depths of the spirit. Compared with most players of her period, Ada Rehan was a prodigy of original force. Her influence, accordingly, was felt more than it was understood, and, being elusive and strange, it prompted wide differences of opinion. The sense that she diffused of a simple, unselfish, patient nature, and of impulsive tenderness of heart, however, cannot have been missed by anybody with eyes to see. And she crowned all by speaking the English language with a purity of enunciation that has seldom been equalled.

When, in reminiscent mood, I muse on the brilliant career of Ada Rehan, the character of the woman, as known to me, seems even more interesting than the achievement of the actress. That character and that

achievement can, perhaps, be significantly indicated, if not summarized, in these words:

Ada Rehan was a creature of simplicity and truth, and likewise of piquancy and fascination. She had not been trained under severe methods of education, but the fine discipline of mind that she possessed,—in which there was an element of great and gentle patience,—was mainly such as she had acquired in practical experience. Her reading, while it included numberless plays and other books such as naturally come within the scope of the dramatic profession, covered a wide field of biography and of imaginative literature. She was a reader of Thackeray,—an author seldom liked by women, perhaps because he understood their weaknesses too well,—and she especially admired the works of Balzac. She had carefully read the novels of those great writers, and had profited by them. Her knowledge of human nature,—gained partly by keen intuition and partly by close observance,—was ample, various, and sound. Her thoughts, and often her talk, dwelt upon traits of character, fabrics of art, and beauties of nature, and she loved rather to speak of these than of the commonplaces and practical affairs of the passing day. Her grasp of character was intuitive; she judged rightly, and she was seldom or never mistaken in her estimate of individuals. Her perception was exceedingly acute, and she noted, instantly and correctly, every

essential trait, however slight, of each person who approached her presence. She was intrinsically sincere, modest, and humble—neither setting a great value upon herself nor esteeming her powers and achievements to be unusual; she has been known to be in tears, at what she deemed a professional failure, while a brilliant throng of friends was waiting to congratulate her on an unequivocal success.

Ada Rehan was a passionate lover of beauty, and she could discern, and cordially admire, the beauty of other women,—a happiness unusual with her sex. She could be conventional, having learned how to be so; but the conventional was not her natural way,—for her temperament had in it something of the romantic quality of the ideal gypsy. Her physical beauty was of the kind that appears in portraits of women by Romney and by Gainsborough,—ample, opulent, bewitching; and it was enriched by the enchantment of superb animal spirits. She had gray-blue eyes and brown hair, which prematurely became gray, and she had the tremulous sensibility of the Celtic nature; a careless strain of music or the lilt of an old ballad would bring tears into her eyes. She lived in feeling more than in thought. She was essentially feminine,—moved by fancies and caprices, subject to doubts and fears, and impressed by the strong will that achieves practical results instead of proclaiming ideal purposes. Her disposition was affec-

tionate rather than passionate, and such as does not yield unduly either to love or grief. She was generous and grateful, and she never forgot a kindness. Her mind was free from envy and bitterness. She saw with pleasure the merited success of others, and she rejoiced in it, and she never spoke an ill word of anybody. Her spirit was mercurial, ranging easily from smiles to tears, but essentially she was joyous; and her image, in memory, will always be associated with mirth.

Ada Rehan was profoundly ambitious to excel in her art, and to that art she gave her life. The predominant characteristic of her acting was buoyant glee, which rippled over a depth of warm, sensuous feeling, and animated an affluent and incessant variety of spirited, flexible, cumulative movement. It possessed many other attributes,—for the actress could be stately, forcible, satirical, violent, arch, flippant, and demure; but its special allurements were a blending of sweetness and joy. She always aroused the eager interest of her audience, and imparted to it a sense of comfort and pleasure; but the amplest and most direct revelations of her mind and temperament were made in such characters as *Rosalind*, *Lady Teazle*, and *Peggy Thrift*. Her delivery of *Rosalind's* speech about woman's caprice, her wheedling talk to *Sir Peter Teazle*, her quarrel with him, and her demeanor of bland, demure innocence, and of sweet simplicity playing over latent roguery, in *Peggy Thrift's* Love Scene and Letter Scene, were perfect and irresisti-

ble. Each of her achievements had a clear design and a symmetrical form, and her acting, if closely scrutinized, was seen to have been studied, yet it always seemed spontaneous: her handsome, ingenuous, winning countenance informed it with sympathy, while her voice,—copious, tender, and musical,—filled it with emotion, speaking from the heart. She was intrinsically a guileless and noble person, and the structure of her acting,—with all its drolleries of careless frolic, sportive coquetry, and tantalizing caprice,—was reared on the basis of a strong, self-contained, womanlike, lovely nature. The most completely finished and authoritative of her graver impersonations was Knowles's *Julia*, and her favorite woman in Shakespeare was *Portia*. Her best performance was that of *Rosalind*. Her most obviously effective and popular performance was that of *Katharine*. She acted more than one hundred and seventy parts, of record, and many others not recorded. Of characters in Shakespeare she impersonated *Beatrice*, *Bianca*, *Celia*, *Cordelia*, *Desdemona*, *Helena*, *Julia*, *Katharine*, *Lady Anne*, *Miranda*, *Mrs. Ford*, *Olivia*, *Ophelia*, *Portia*, *Prince Edward*, *the Princess of France*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Queen of France*, *Rosalind*, *Ursula*, and *Viola*.

Ada Rehan's domestic life was, for the most part, tranquil and happy,—diversified with study, and with the sportive company of her animal pets. Among those pets were a monkey, named Chip, and a bulldog, named

Fun: the former an interesting creature of its kind; the latter a faithful animal, which inspired regard rather by its virtues than its propitiatory aspect. Above all, she was fond of a little King Charles spaniel, called Bobs; but to all she was deeply attached. I have seen her wandering, with her dog, on the broad, solitary waste of the breezy beach that stretches away, for many a sunlit mile, in front of her sequestered cottage on the Cumberland shore of the Irish Sea. She was never so contented, never so radiant, never so much herself, as in that beautiful retreat. The nearest house is a mile distant. Far in the east rise the peaks of Coniston and Skiddaw. More near, like an eagle on its crag, is perched the ancient castle of the lords of Muncaster. Southward lies Furness, with its venerable ruined abbey. To the north the land trends away, past Queen Mary Stuart's fatal haven and Wordsworth's earliest home, to the dim and cloudy capes of Scotland: while, remote in the west, if the air be clear, a faint outline is visible of the romantic Isle of Man. There, encompassed by associations of natural beauty and of historic and poetic renown, and surrounded by her books, pictures, relics, music, and her pets, she was happy. There she was respected and beloved. There for many years her memory will be treasured. And not only there; for, on both sides of the ocean, she has given happiness to thousands of hearts; and in them her name will be enshrined, as long as love remembers.

ADA REHAN'S ACTING.

*"The grace of action, the adopted mien,
Faithful as Nature to the varied scene;
Th' expressive glance, whose subtle comment draws
Entranc'd attention and a mute applause;
Gesture that marks, with force and feeling fraught,
A sense in silence and a will in thought;
Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone
Gives verse a music scarce confess'd its own,—
As light from gems assumes a brighter ray
And, clothed with orient hues, transcends the day."*

—SHERIDAN.

In the records which remain of the famous women of the Stage the potent charm of their acting is fervently asserted but seldom or never fully explained. The biographies, for example, that commemorate Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Dancer, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Duff, and Mrs. Wheatley, while they are profuse and sometimes enthusiastic in specification of the exploits and the particular triumphs of those illustrious actors, can be said to mention their power rather than to display it. When all has been told that words can tell of those eminent combinations of genius and beauty, there is still something which remains untold. The fascinating allurements of eyes and voice, the enchantment of individuality, the charm of temperament, the puissant sympathetic force, the spell of inspiration,—those attributes cannot be crystal-

lized into the written word. The biographer can only declare that they existed; their magical loveliness and their triumphant sway must be imagined. The Past exulted in many dramatic idols; the Present has inherited only their names. So it has ever been and so it will be forever. Admirable dramatic leaders of the Present will doubtless be known to the Future, but they will be known as shadows. Their fame may fly onward: the reason for it will remain behind. What words can transmit to posterity the smile of Ellen Terry or the voice of Ada Rehan?

The pictorial art has done much for actors,—more than could be done for them by the art of writing. The best understood and most admired actor of the distant past is David Garrick, and that is mainly because many portraits were made of him, which still survive,—most of them good, and many of them superbly illuminative of what must indeed have been an enchanting face. To the pictorial art, accordingly, judgment, taste, and friendship will resort when they are wishful to commemorate an actor. Portraits of Ada Rehan would tell more about her than can be told in words, for they would take a wide range, and therein they would denote the versatility which was one of her prominent characteristics. They would show her in heroines of Shakespeare; in the women of Old English Comedy; in characters of modern comedy,—a theatrical fabric much tinged with farce,—and in characters that are almost

tragical. She was eminently successful, and the field of thought in which, obviously, she must have deeply studied, is extensive, diversified, and important; so that her success was an eloquent denotement of her elemental power and her various ability. In the experience of Ada Rehan, however, as in that of other actors, it was shown that the dramatic faculty becomes, in time, defined and restricted as to its natural, and therefore its best, expression by peculiarities and limitations of temperament, which assign it to special types of human nature and to various modifications of them. Miss Rehan did not begin at the top, but humbly, in a minor character and at a provincial theatre, and from that lowly station she rose to the rank of the leading woman in the leading theatre of America. In that progress she developed an original, brilliant personality, and by her natural aptitude for the mood of buoyant raillery which plays over a depth of tender feeling she proved herself born for the province of the comedian.

The American Stage, viewing it as a national institution, has only of comparatively late years become an independent power. It was built by British actors. The moment you begin to inquire into the origin of the dramatic luminaries of the first century of the American Theatre you are surprised to find how many of them were wanderers from the British Isles; and even within the last seventy years the record shows a continuous influx

of the dramatic spirit of the motherland. Among the actors who have exercised special influence upon the American Stage since 1750 scarcely more than a score could be named who were born in America. With the advent of Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman the tide began to turn, and since then the Theatre in America has expanded and arisen under the influence of such native-born Americans as Edward Loomis Davenport, Edwin Booth, William Warren, Joseph Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, Lester Wallack, John Gilbert, Edwin Adams, Genevieve Ward, Mary Anderson, Fanny Davenport, and Minnie Maddern Fiske. One of the most distinctive products of the American Stage is Clara Morris, but Miss Morris was born in Canada. Ada Rehan, though a native of Ireland, gained her experience and her rank in America. Like many other sparkling persons born in the land of Oliver Goldsmith and Margaret Woffington, Miss Rehan possessed that temperament of tremulous sensibility which oscillates between smiles and tears, but, unlike many of her tumultuous compatriots, she evinced an equable mind and that complete mental control of her faculties and her artistic resources which is the main constituent of intellectual character. Her performances, therefore, not only captured the heart of her time but convinced its judgment. They were veritable impersonations, much diversified, but strongly marked—as they ought to be—with the individualism of the actor, and that

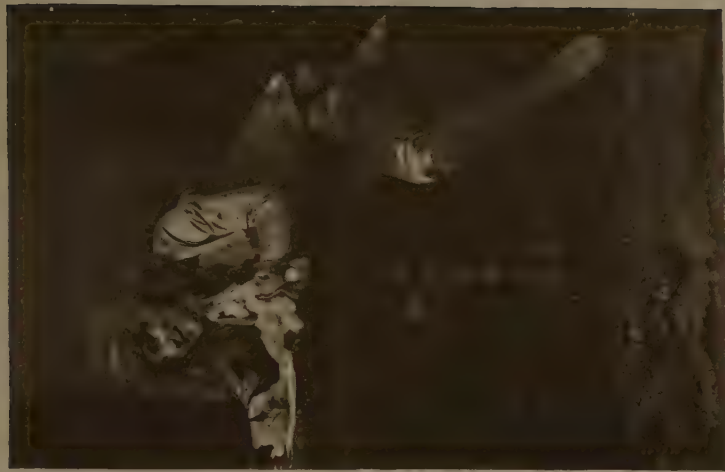
gave to them their chief value. Many actors, like many writers, leave their works, as they pass through the world, much as a carpenter might leave a fabric of his craft that had been purchased from him: the job is done and the goods are delivered. Such actors put nothing of themselves into their art. The product of their effort may be useful, but it is colorless and cold, and no one regards it or remembers it. Ada Rehan was, from the first, exceptional for intense earnestness and self-devotion. Each part that she undertook was permeated with something of herself, and was played as well as she could possibly play it. Her soul was given to her profession, and the nature of the woman herself was discerned in that of the characters she best represented. Exigent observers of acting have been known to object to that sincerity in an actor, maintaining that the only true actor is he who utterly sinks his identity and comes on so well disguised that he cannot be recognized. That might be a valuable accomplishment in a detective policeman, but it is a trivial accomplishment in a dramatic artist. The faculty of taking on many shapes is one of the primitive faculties of dramatic art and it makes a good mimic, but expertness in the assumption of disguises is not skill in the impersonation of character. The interpreter of human nature must go far deeper than that. Neither is it ever desirable that an actor should so far be obscured in what he represents that his spiritual identity, his personal quality, shall

disappear. The woman who plays *Juliet* must represent *Juliet's* love, not her own; yet it is with her own voice, her eyes, her demeanor and ways that she must represent this, and the passion of her heart, the glow of her spirit, the charm of her personality, *her* knowledge of the nature and extent of human experience, must enter into the emotion and into the personality that she assumes to portray. Murillo painted many contrasted subjects, but every painting by Murillo bears the unmistakable stamp of his individualism and would be worthless without it. A true actor will show many different persons, but in one respect they will be the same,—and ought to be the same,—in the pervasive and dominant attribute of his genius. The quality that makes a performance specifically and distinctively that of Ellen Terry, or Sarah Bernhardt, or Julia Marlowe, or Ada Rehan, must be present, or the performance may as well be that of somebody else,—anybody,—a wooden image, for example, that is worked with strings. Ada Rehan manifested not only the art to personify but the power to impress herself upon her embodiments; and, therefore, whoever remembers the matchless figure of Shakespeare's *Katharine* that she set on the stage will also remember the imperial presence, the impassioned face, the gray eyes flashing with pride and scorn or melting with tenderness, the fine freedom of graceful demeanor, the supple beauty of movement and the exquisite loveliness of voice which combined in the inves-



*From a Photograph.
In the Collection of the Author.*

Katharine Minola, in "The Taming of the
Shrew."



*From a Photograph by Saroni.
In the Collection of the Author.*

Peggy Thrift, in "The Country Girl."

ADA REHAN

titute that the actress gave to the part, and which were the close denotements of her personality.

The long list of parts that have been represented by Ada Rehan since 1873 indicates, as nothing else can do, the versatility of the actress and the drift, variety, and scope of her study and experience. Resolute but not presumptuous courage was one of her characteristic virtues, and she did not hesitate to attempt new characters or to assume old ones, however difficult or however renowned. Her mental attitude was always that of a mind which thinks for itself. The veteran actors, indeed, with whom she was from time to time associated imparted to her the traditional "business" of many plays. It is in that way that the traditions are preserved. Augustin Daly, a close observer and a diligent and practical student of the Theatre during many years of active relationship with its affairs, also aided in her professional education. Many actors receive benefits of that kind, in their upward progress, which some of them are slow to appreciate and quick to forget. Miss Rehan understood them and often expressed to me her sense of their value. Such help doubtless facilitated her advancement, but in the main her victory was due to personal charm, originality of mind, acute and winning sensibility, abundant animal spirits, a gleeful distinction, affluent personal beauty, an extraordinary faculty as well as an irresistible impulse for dramatic art, and the spontaneous custom of looking at character with

her own eyes and acting each part in a natural manner. A great merit of the acting of Miss Rehan was its freedom from affectation. Her Old Comedy performances afforded conspicuous illustration of that merit, and of her custom of going directly to the author's text for his meaning and directly to Nature for the inspiration of her art. To be simple and natural on the stage of to-day, in compositions so local and particular as those of Vanbrugh, Wycherley, Cibber, and Farquhar, is not "a property of easiness," yet Miss Rehan embodied *Miss Hoyden*, *Peggy Thrift*, *Hippolyta*, *Sylvia*, and *Oriana*, and she made those parts appreciable to contemporary intelligence and sympathetic with modern taste. No actress of our time ever exhibited a happier faculty or a more flexible method of infusing her personal vitality into the old forms. "The Country Wife,"—a comedy that Wycherley, with silken skill but feculent fancy, deduced from the satire of Molière, had to be greatly modified before it could be shown to the more decent audience of a later day. Garrick converted it into "The Country Girl," and Augustin Daly refined the texture of the Garrick fabric before introducing it on the American Stage. The result was a comical image of demurely mischievous girlhood, and that was personified by Ada Rehan in a mood of bewitching ingenuousness and rippling frolic. The ideal is that of an apparently simple girl, who, in practice of the wiles of love and courtship, comically develops a sudden and astonishing dex-

terity. The mixture of candor and quaintness in Miss Rehan's manner, giving zest to exuberant personal charms, invested that performance with a singular fascination, concealing all the faults of the character, which, undeniably, are vanity, coquetry, and deceitfulness.

In producing those Old English Comedies Daly found it essential to alter each of them, in some particulars. Adverting to the lax times when they were written, the spectator is not surprised at that precautionary exercise of prudence and taste. "The Country Wife" dates back to 1675; "The Inconstant," to 1702; "She Would and She Would Not," to 1703; "The Recruiting Officer," to 1705, and "The Critic," to 1781. In his arrangement of "The Critic" Daly used many additions that originated with Charles Mathews, whose incisive, trenchant, sapient impersonation of *Mr. Puff* cannot have been forgotten by any one who had the privilege of seeing it; but while "The Critic," as Sheridan constructed it, on the basis of Buckingham's "Rehearsal," is an ample three-act piece, Daly's version is condensed into one act. It was presented at Daly's Theatre on December 26, 1888, and later revived. Changes in that play are invariably made, as often as it is acted, merely on the ground of expediency, and not as a matter of either morality or taste. It has long been the custom to introduce local "gags" into "The Critic," and to vary its nomenclature, according to the company that might happen to be representing it. In

that way the apposite significance of the farce is preserved for each succeeding generation. When the Duke of Buckingham produced "The Rehearsal" (it was begun in 1663 but was not brought out till 1671) he directed its chief shaft of satire against Dryden, who was imaged in the character of *Bayes*. When Sheridan produced "The Critic" he ridiculed his contemporary Richard Cumberland, who is indicated in *Sir Fretful Plagiary*. But no drift of that sort animates the play for later times, and in order that it may be made significant and piquant to a contemporary audience its satirical mirth is poured upon false methods in acting as well as upon false taste in composition. The vanity of actors and the absurd side of stage-tradition are made ridiculous in it, nor is it devoid of an implication of satire upon the caprice and the dulness possible to an audience. Ada Rehan, as *Tilburina*, proved herself possessed of the true instinct and faculty of burlesque, for in the acting of that part she maintained an air of intense earnestness, amounting to positive solemnity; she was seemingly both passionate and pathetic; and she uttered the bombastic nonsense of *Tilburina's* inflated speeches with profound and fervid sincerity. Her quick lapses from a serious manner to that of petulant impatience and commonplace colloquy had an irresistible effect equally of truth and of involuntary humor. The faculty that especially appertains to an actor, that of assuming character and emotion at

will, was conspicuously illustrated in that fine performance, for in *Tilburina's* Mad Scene,—as also in that of Farquhar's *Oriana*,—the actress displayed a depth of feeling and a power that would be appropriate and not inadequate even to the delicate, beautiful, exacting part of Shakespeare's *Ophelia*. It is an old story that the best comedian is an actor of deep heart and serious disposition. When Ada Rehan embodied *Mlle. Rose*, the *Priest's* sister, in Coppée's striking drama of "The Prayer," no one acquainted with her nature was surprised at the elemental passion, the pathos, and the almost tragic power with which she expressed a devoted woman's experience of affliction, misery, fierce resentment, self-conquest, self-abnegation, forgiveness, and fortitude. She did not then, nor at any time, show herself to be a tragic actress, but she evinced great force and deep feeling. Quin's remark about Mrs. Cibber, when Garrick expressed to him a doubt that she could play Shakespeare's *Constance*, could well have been applied to Miss Rehan: "That woman," he cried, "has a heart and can do anything where passion is required."

Yet it is not distinctively in characters of passion that Miss Rehan gained her fame. *Helena* and *Katharine*, indeed, are passionate persons, but not in the sense in which *Constance* is passionate, or *Juliet*, or *Queen Margaret*, or Otway's *Belvidera*, or Congreve's *Zara*. In *Helena*, who is not less noble than affectionate, the

violent infatuation of love for *Demetrius*, struggling against self-esteem and prevailing over reticence of character and maidenly reserve, creates a state of grieved passion not less afflicting to its victim than touching to her sympathetic observers. Miss Rehan struck that note with perfect precision, and it is seldom that the Stage presents such a form of gentle, forlorn, and winning sweetness and beauty as the *Helena* of that actress was, when seeking to break away from the wrangle of the lovers in the forest, dejected and submissive, asking only that she might be allowed to go, and saying, in the soft accents of hopeless sorrow, "You see how simple and how fond I am." In *Katharine* the passion is confused; it mingles many ingredients; but chiefly it is that of a tumultuous and tempestuous temper. A strong woman every way, *Katharine* at first revolts against every sort of curb or control, and especially against the sweet, loving, ardent impulses inherent in her own nature. There is tremendous vehemence in *Katharine*, but also there is incipient tenderness, and, therefore, there is self-conflict; and it was a special and signal beauty of Ada Rehan's impersonation of *Katharine* that she indicated this by subtle denotements, and was not merely a whirlwind of combative rage. All the passion that is warranted, or that could be desired, was expressed, but the crown of the assumption was a woman-like charm,—an admixture of tremulous sensibility and kind, caressing, cherishing ardor and good-

ness; the something that makes a woman's love the best blessing that there is in human life. That attribute, rather than the attribute of passion, was the predominant and distinctive characteristic of Miss Rehan's dramatic art. No one would have expected her to prosper in the sanguinary queens of the ancient classic stage or in the empurpled criminals of modern melodrama. For such a nature the *Medeas*, *Phædras*, *Théodoras*, and *Toscas* are out of the question. It is woman in her lovelier aspects that was portrayed by Miss Rehan; woman at her best that was suggested by her; and her success was the more honorable to herself, and the more beneficent to the public, for that reason.

One of the most womanlike of all the women that have been drawn in Old Comedy is Farquhar's *Oriana*, and Miss Rehan's performance of that part was in her best manner. *Oriana* is skilful in coquetry, and she makes a dexterous use of many wiles in order to subdue and capture the restless, capricious, vagrant spirit of the exigent, adventurous, roving *Mirabel*; but she dearly loves him, she would die for him, and she becomes heroic and splendid in his service,—saving his life by her indomitable nerve and discreet and expeditious energy. In male attire, which she assumed in *Oriana*, *Sylvia*, *Hippolyta*, *Peggy Thrift*, *Pierrot*, *Mockworld*, Shakespeare's *Julia*, *Viola*, and *Rosalind*, Ada Rehan was particularly captivating; and, indeed, the spectator was surprised at the number and variety of male

peculiarities that she was able to imitate. Her assumption of the swaggering gallant, when *Sylvia* puts on man's apparel, would have bewitched the sternest judgment. No performer on the American Stage, since the halcyon days of Mrs. Barrow and Mrs. Wood, had approximated to her brilliancy of expression of the gay audacity and elegant insolence of *Hippolyta*, when masquerading as *Don Philip*, and denouncing the actual *Don* as an impostor, in the home of *Don Manuel*. Yet, after all, even in male attire and when meeting the exigencies of the scene by pretending to be a man, it was the intrinsic charm of womanhood that illumined her art and invested it with the authentic attribute of enchantment. That charm was of rare opulence and variety, and Miss Rehan's rapid conquest and secure retention of public favor in the capitals of the New World and of the Old were explained chiefly by it. When she assumed *Rosalind*, the capability of personal fascination made her immediately successful in that character,—of all Shakespeare's women the one which, perhaps, is the most readily appreciable, and, at the same time, is the most frequently in controversy. Her way of acting that part was to be a gleeful yet loving woman, and not a poetical conceit or a metaphysical abstraction. *Rosalind* is not "of the earth, earthy," but neither is she made of mist and moonbeams. The blood dances merrily in her veins, and the fires of ardent desire equally with the glad lights of happy mirth

sparkle in her eyes. She is a lover and not ashamed of her love,—which, indeed, like everything else about her, is natural, simple, spontaneous, and pure. It is the vain effort to rear upon the basis of Shakespeare's text, in "As You Like It," a superstructure of vague, ethereal, elusive, strained, complex character and recondite meaning that has perplexed the stage ideal of *Rosalind* and made it seem almost inaccessible; but the cloudy refinements cast about that part by theorists are nowhere to be found in the play. Miss Rehan's simple method of treating it was therefore a great refreshment. She was naturally noble and free. She made no declaration of superiority and had no need to announce that her intentions were virtuous. Her demeanor showed not the slightest trace of that self-consciousness which creates indelicacy in parts of this order. She was the image of youth, beauty, happiness, merriment, and of an absorbing and triumphant love. When she dashed through the trees of Arden, snatching the verses of *Orlando* from their boughs, and cast herself at the foot of a great elm, to read those fond messages that *Rosalind's* heart instantly and instinctively ascribes to their right source, her gray eyes were brilliant with tender joy; her cheeks were flushed; her whole person, in its graceful abandonment of posture, seemed to express an ecstasy of happy vitality and of victorious delight; her hands that held the written scrolls trembled with eager, tumultuous, grateful joy;

the voice with which she read her lover's words made soft cadences of them and seemed to caress every syllable; and as the last rhyme,

"Let no face be kept in mind,
But the fair of Rosalind,"

fell from her lips, like a drop of liquid silver, the exquisite music of her speech seemed to die away in one soft sigh of pleasure. While, however, she thus denoted the passionate heart of *Rosalind* and her ample bliss of sensation and exultant yet tender pride of conquest, she never once relaxed the tension of her glee. In an ordinary representation of "As You Like It" the interest commonly declines after the Third Act, if not earlier, from lack of exuberant physical vitality and of the propulsive force of sympathetic mirth in *Rosalind*. When Ada Rehan played the part the performance only grew richer and merrier as it proceeded,—developing the exuberant nature and glad experience of a loving and enchanting woman, who sees the whole world suffused with golden light, irradiated from her own happy heart, her healthful and brilliant mind, her buoyant spirit and inexhaustible goodness and joy.

The inspiration of the character of *Viola* is commingled love and mirth. She is a woman of deep sensibility, and in that way Ada Rehan comprehended and embodied her,—permitting a wistful sadness to glimmer through the gauze of sweet, winning vivacity with which her bright and gentle figure is artfully



From a Photograph by Sarony. In the Collection of the Author.

ADA REHAN
as
Rosalind, in "As You Like It."

swathed. That was the pervading beauty of the impersonation. The frolic scenes in which *Viola* participates elicited Ada Rehan's natural propensity for mirth, as also her faculty for comic action. She rejoiced in them, and she made her auditors rejoice in them. But the underlying cause of her success in them was the profound sincerity of her feeling,—over which her joy was seen to play as moonlight plays on the rippling surface of the ocean. In that embodiment she relied on a soft and gentle poetry of condition, avoiding the expedient of strong emphasis, whether of color, demeanor, or speech. Her action was exceedingly delicate, and if at any moment she became conspicuous in a scene it was as the consequence of dramatic necessity, not of self-assertion. Reserve and aristocratic distinction blended in the performance, and dignified and endeared it. The melody of Shakespeare's verse,—especially in the passage of *Viola's* renunciation,—fell from her lips in a strain of fluent sweetness that enhanced its beauty and deepened the pathos of its tender significance. In such tones the heart speaks, and not simply the fervor of an excited mind, and so the incommunicable something that the soul knows of love and sorrow finds expression. Ada Rehan was admirably true to the Shakespearean ideal in that particular, as also she was in expressing the large generosity of *Viola* toward *Olivia's* beauty. It is only a woman intrinsically noble who can be just toward her prosperous rival in

love. Ada Rehan, in her embodiment of *Viola*, obeyed the fine artistic impulse to make no effort. Her performance was as natural and as lovely as the opening of the rose. She permitted the pensive tenderness and the sweet gravity which are in her nature to permeate her portraiture of the character, and to express themselves honestly and simply. Her elocution was perfect,—concealing premeditation, and flowing, as a brook flows, with continuous music and spontaneous, accidental variety. She wore the boy-dress with grace. No woman can have played *the boy* better. Her by-play, in the scene in which *Viola* attends *Orsino* while he is listening to *Feste's* song, was a striking evidence of the inspiration of genius. Her stage business was mostly new. Her appearance was beautiful. Her witchery in *Viola* did not reside in her action,—although that was appropriate, dignified, symmetrical, expressive, and winning,—but in her assumption and preservation of a sweet, resigned patience; not despairing, not lachrymose,—a gentle, wistful aspect and state of romantic melancholy, veiled, but not concealed, beneath a guise of buoyant, careless joy. The fine instinct with which she thus comprehended and revealed the soul of *Viola*, together with the wildwood freedom and limpid fluency of her action and the air at once of sensuous allurements and spiritual loveliness with which she invested her ideal, manifested a poetic actress of the first order.

There are many actors of whom the playgoer thinks

with interest and mild approbation, but it is only of the few that he thinks with enthusiasm. Ada Rehan is one of the few, and always the mention of her name awakened and still awakens a thrill of sympathy. Beauty, genius, a kind heart, and rare technical skill,—attributes seldom united in one person,—were united in her, and those attributes, in their union, constitute a power such as must always play a serious part in human affairs. Practical minds may despise and condemn the idea of sentiment as to an actress; but each succeeding generation of youth has its heroines of the Stage, who exert upon it, at the most sensitive and susceptible period of life,—coloring its ideals, affecting its ambitions, and aiding to form its character,—an influence both profound and permanent. Anne Bracegirdle is said to have possessed a prodigious power of that kind, in her day, and so doubtless, at a later time, did Peg Woffington, and Sarah Siddons, and Dora Jordan, and so certainly did Ellen Tree and Adelaide Neilson. There is scarcely a memoir of a distinguished man within the last hundred years that does not show him, at an early, and sometimes at a late, period of his career, in subservience to the spell of genius and art diffused from the Stage by a beautiful woman. Even as great, reserved, and serious a scholar as Matthew Arnold has recorded that he followed from city to city in order to see the French actress Rachel. How essential it is that this artistic influence should be noble

every thinker will at once feel and concede, for its consequences are momentous and endless. The time was blessed beyond its knowledge of its own welfare that was favored with the presence and influence of Ada Rehan. If fifty years had passed away and she had become a memory, there would be no reluctance in the general admission of the truth. The word that then would be said with pensive regret can now, accordingly, be said with grateful admiration. For the audience of her generation this actress was a representative image and an authentic voice. Her experience has become to some extent their experience, and her testimony as to each elemental impulse and feeling of human nature, transmitted through the potencies of dramatic art, has largely contributed to shape their views and establish their convictions. For many a day the standard of dramatic art that she erected in Shakespeare's *Rosalind* and in Farquhar's *Oriana*, in *Lady Teazle*, *Peggy Thrift*, and *Letitia Hardy* will maintain itself with inexorable authority upon the Stage, while the ideals of passionate and tender womanhood that she embodied in *Katharine*, *Helena*, *Viola*, *Sister Rose*, *Kate Verity*, and Knowles's *Julia* will crystallize in the popular imagination and enkindle and charm the popular heart.

Another Shakespearean character in which Ada Rehan proved proficient and charming is *Mrs. Ford*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." That play shows

the art by which adroitly humorous treatment can be made to palliate vulgarity of subject. Two sprightly women undertake and accomplish the discomfiture of a vicious, presumptuous, ridiculous suitor. Such a frolic might be possible at any time and in any place. The two wives, *Mrs. Ford* and *Mrs. Page*, are virtuous women, but they are not fastidious,—indeed, they are coarse. *Mrs. Ford* is a ripe, buxom, captivating woman, overflowing with animal spirits and fond of innocent mischief,—in the expedients of which she is fertile and dexterous. She looks upon the amorous *Falstaff* with amused tolerance which scarcely amounts to contempt. She will thoroughly fool and rebuke him, and will throw him aside with precisely the sort of punishment that will plunge him into absurdity and humiliation. But she is not malicious, neither does she harbor resentment. The right personification of *Mrs. Ford* involves innate purity and spontaneous, unequivocal moral worth, combined with a buoyant spirit of frolicsome mischief and an arch, demure, piquant manner. Miss Rehan entered fully into the spirit of the part and flashed through the piece like a sunbeam. The reality of that embodiment was especially vital. In *Mrs. Ford*, as in *Sylvia*, Miss Rehan presented a woman in whom an exuberant and sportive animal life transcends all other attributes. And, indeed, one way or another, subject to various modifications, that element entered into all her comedy assumptions,

particularly the blooming damsels and spirited widows of the comedy of to-day. *Doris*, in "An International Match," and *Nisbe*, in "A Night Off," are good types of the eager, sprightly, happy girl whom she portrayed with infectious buoyancy and in the spontaneous, flexible, limpid drift of nature. *Cousin Val*,—*Valentine Osprey*,—in "The Railroad of Love," embodies that personality in even a more substantial form, and inter-fuses it with passionate emotion. In *Nisbe* there is latent mischief commingled with an artful assumption of girlish coyness. In *Cousin Val* a deep heart is veiled beneath an almost reckless gayety of manner, and much tenderness of feeling becomes visible through an outward guise of raillery and gleeful indifference. Miss Rehan's expression of the resentment of offended pride and wounded love, in the scene of the misunderstanding in that piece, is remembered for its splendid sincerity, its fine fervor, and its absolute simplicity of art. The play treats of an impending breach between two sincere lovers and of the happy chance by which that catastrophe is averted. An impulsive woman, momentarily persuaded that her suitor is a mercenary adventurer, has sent a harsh letter of dismissal to him, and then has ascertained that her doubt was unfounded and unworthy; whereupon she perceives the imperative necessity that her letter, which by chance has not reached him, should be recovered. Her plan is to detain him during her quest for that dreaded epistle, which she

will obtain and destroy, so that he may never know how unjust and how cruel her thoughts have been. The structure of the situation rests on unwarranted panic,—since *Valentine* might take for granted her lover's pardon,—but the situation itself is fraught with formidable significance and suffused with passionate excitement. Miss Rehan made it important and impressive. Her denotement of the conflict of passion when writing the letter lifted *Valentine* almost to the high level of *Julia* in a kindred passage in "The Hunchback," while her subsequent contrition and dismay, her effort to subdue a feverish apprehension, and to conceal her anxiety under a playful manner, together with her grieved yet gay trepidation while imposing upon her lover the frivolous task of doing a bit of embroidery, were all made confluent in a current of singular sweetness and were swathed in the tremulous April atmosphere of smiles and tears. That assumption of character, not inaptly representative of contemporary young women, in the sentimental aspect of their lives, was remarkable equally for the variety and sparkle of its constituent parts and for the mingled force and piquancy of its art, for it was an image of airy banter, satirical raillery, piquant archness, demure mischief, pungent sarcasm, irrational, tantalizing, delicious feminine caprice, nobility of mind, and passionate ardor of heart. In the centuries that have passed since the Drama began to bear witness to human nature and social life woman has

been the same creature of infinite variety and often inexplicable complexity, herself creative and therefore unconsciously participant in the insoluble mystery of creation; but in each succeeding period woman has existed as a social type with distinguishing traits and characteristics. In Miss Rehan's period she conspicuously showed the attributes that were crystallized in Miss Rehan's embodiment of maids like *Doris* and dames like *Valentine*. The heroines of modern comedy are seen to act from the same motives and to pursue the same objects that impel and attract the heroines of Cibber, Farquhar, Mrs. Centlivre, Mrs. Inchbald, and Sheridan; yet they are essentially of a different order of thought and manner. The modern heroine does not pique her roving swain by getting into male attire and facing him down as an impostor; neither does she pretend to be a piteous lunatic in order to lure him out of his intrenchments; but she loves as dearly; she is just as expert, whether in hiding her love or in showing it; she is just as wishful to captivate, and she is just as fitful and capricious, as any *Hippolyta*, or *Oriana*, or *Sylvia*, or *Mrs. Sullen*, or *Violante*, or *Lydia Languish*, that ever sparkled on the remote British Stage.

The successful stage representative of woman proves true to the specific character of her time as well as to the elemental and permanent character of her sex. She does not live in the study but in the world. Her works are personifications and not historical antiquities. Miss

Rehan might not have succeeded in reproducing such fantastic women as often were drawn by Jonson and Dryden, but any woman of the Old Comedy who is really a woman would have become as vital and sympathetic in her embodiment as if she were living in the actual world of to-day. It is for the lecturer to expound; it is for the actor to interpret. Miss Rehan, like her great and renowned sister in dramatic art, Ellen Terry,—the most distinctively poetic actress of her period,—possessed the power to personify and could give the touch of reality. The young women of her day saw themselves in Ada Rehan's portrayals of them. The young men of her day recognized in those portrayals the fulfilment of that ideal of sensuous sentiment, piquant freedom, and impetuous ardor, combined with rich beauty of person and negligent elegance of manner, which they accounted the perfection of womanhood, and upon which their fancy dwelt with supreme content. That this lovely actress could move easily in the realm of the imagination was proved by her fluent and sparkling performances of *Rosalind* and *Viola*; but it was more significant, for the great body of contemporary playgoers, that she could speak in the voice, and look through the eyes, and interpret the spirit, of the passing hour.

Among the incidental yet notable performances given by Miss Rehan there were two which strongly suggested her exceptional versatility. One of them was *Xantippe*,

in "The Wife of Socrates"; the other was *Jenny O'Jones*, in "Red-Letter Nights." The first of those pieces is a bit of blank-verse dialogue, written by Justin H. McCarthy, upon the basis of a French piece by Théodore de Banville. It was produced at Daly's Theatre on October 30, 1888. Miss Rehan wore a robe of golden silk and her noble, spirited head was crowned with an aureole of red hair. *Xantippe*, resentful of the perfect composure of *Socrates*, scolds and storms till, in the tempest of her passion, she is suddenly thrown into a syncope, whereupon she is thought to be dead. But while she is recovering from that swoon she hears the sorrowful, affectionate protestations of love that are uttered by her husband, and perceiving then his sincerity, devotion, and sweetness and her own unwomanlike violence and acrimony of temper, she changes from a shrew to a meek and loving woman. Miss Rehan acted that part in a strain of passionate impetuosity, and, at times, with fine sarcasm. Her elocution was uncommonly sweet. Her action was marked by incessant and piquant variety. She flashed from one mood to another, and placed many phases of the feminine nature in vivid contrast. The embodiment was one of sumptuous personal beauty, and after the storm of shrewish rage and turbulent jealousy had spent its force the portrayal closed with the suggestion of a lovely ideal of nobility and gentleness. When there is a close correspondence between the temperament

of the actor and the temperament of the part that is represented a greater freedom of expression is naturally reached. That correspondence existed in the culminating passage of that play, between Miss Rehan and the conquered *Xantippe*, and the success of the actress was brilliant. In dealing with the shrewish aspect of the part she obeyed the same subtle impulse that she had wisely followed in her treatment of Shakespeare's *Katharine*: the dress was made to harmonize with the spirit of its wearer. Her shrew was red-haired, high-colored, and like a scorching flame. Set against that brilliant embodiment, *Jenny O'Jones*, a farcical episode, inspired a sentiment of wonder that the same woman should be able to invest with a suitable body two such utterly divergent, contrasted persons. The character was made by Daly and written by him into his version of a German play, which he named "Red-Letter Nights." In that scene Miss Rehan, representing an amiable though wild and mischievous girl, was constrained to adopt the same expedient that *Letitia Hardy* chooses, in "The Belle's Stratagem," though with a different purpose. Being sought in marriage by a disagreeable old man, the heroine pretends to be a slatternly hoyden, and her singing of a song about *Jenny O'Jones*, which she declares to contain more than a hundred verses, all of which are alike, discomfits the obnoxious applicant and puts him to flight. It is a violent expedient of humor,—it is much as if *Rosa-*

lind should pretend to be *Audrey*,—but it is exceedingly droll, and, seeing that the actress whose art could touch such extremes of character and of poetry as *Katharine* and *Rosalind*, *Ophelia* and *Peggy Thrift*, *Julia* and *Marian Lea*, *Beatrice* and *Miranda*, could also create and sustain an illusion in the domain of downright broad farce, the observer was naturally impressed by the rare and fine talent which distinctively marks an actor,—the capability of impersonation. It was that faculty, authenticated and made irresistible by personal charm, that made Ada Rehan a leader in her profession, and that prompts and justifies commemoration of the grace, humor, tenderness, and beauty of her acting and the auspicious worth of her artistic powers.

Ada Rehan obtained a triumphant success as *Letitia Hardy*. Her portrayal of *Letitia's* assumed awkwardness was easily perfect. Her adroit use of the Milkmaid song cast a glow of delicious humor, commingled with the perplexing spell of latent refinement, over that image of rosy rusticity, and it was quite possible to sympathize with *Doricourt's* bewilderment when he said that he had seen in her eyes an expression that seemed to mock the folly of her lips. The essential attribute of *Letitia Hardy* is feminine fascination, and that was imparted by Ada Rehan to every fibre of the embodiment. In the Masquerade Scene the victorious air was sustained with inflexible refinement and undeviating grace, and those exquisite speeches about the ideal

woman,—so easily spoiled, so difficult to deliver,—came off in the rippling tones of one of the most musical voices ever heard on our Stage. In demeanor, likewise,—in the preservation of stateliness and high-bred isolation,—the actress was at her best and unimpeachable. No one of her predecessors as *Letitia Hardy*,—looking back as far as the springtime of Julia Bennett Barrow,—acted the part with a more intrinsic loftiness of womanlike spirit, with more dignity and grace of bearing, or with a more fortunate assumption of rustic silliness in the Hoyden Scene, and no one of them made it so essentially diffusive of womanlike allurements. In that particular the characteristic embodiments of Miss Rehan have seldom been equalled. The secret of that allurements is elusive. Among its elements are passionate sincerity, the manifest capability of imparting great happiness, triumphant personal beauty, which yet is touched and softened by a wistful and sympathetic sadness, and that controlling and compelling instinct, essentially feminine, which endows with vital import every experience of love, and creates a perfect illusion in scenes of fancied bliss or woe. The piquant aspect of the character of *Letitia Hardy* was heightened and made the more delightful in Miss Rehan's impersonation because of the emphasis that she laid upon its gravity, making the personality genuine and imparting to *Letitia's* stratagem a momentous importance. In actual life no woman ever really approves of levity and laughter over affairs of the heart.

Those, to women, are serious things, and throughout all her performances in artificial comedy, whether old or new, Miss Rehan was specially felicitous in her fidelity to that instinct of earnest womanhood. The common practice of the stage has been, in such characters as *Letitia*, to aim only at sparkle and dash. The victorious excellence and artistic superiority of Miss Rehan's assumption were obvious in its union of glittering impetuosity and merry witchery with true passion, womanlike tenderness of heart, and the many sweet ways and innocent wiles with which a loving woman involuntarily commends herself to the object of her love. The embodiment was not a frolic, but a round, coherent, truthful, fascinating portrayal of human nature.

On the same night when Ada Rehan first appeared as *Letitia Hardy* she also acted *Mockworld*, in a fanciful, romantic play, by Miss Clo Graves, called "The Knave." The character is a picturesque vagabond. The scene is a town in Germany. The vagabond has saved a lovely girl from a mediæval tyrannical nobleman, and has subjected that potentate to humiliation and disgrace, and, thereupon, the tyrant has issued a proclamation dooming him to death. It is near the end of a summer day when that chivalric outlaw drifts into the marketplace of the town, where the written mandate of his doom has just been displayed. He is asked to read it, since no one else then present can read, and he does read it, with slight variations, and, though suspected,

he temporarily eludes detection. He is entertained by the magistrate, and he recounts some of his adventures, not only to that functionary, but in the hearing of the girl whom his courage and skill have saved. The girl's fancy is taken by him, and it is evident that her liking might soon ripen into love. The two speak together, and the knave surprises the secret of the girl's heart. It is a crisp and pretty colloquy,—not a word being wasted, and the drift being steadily dramatic. The heart of the knave is touched, and he knows that he might find the happiness and peace of love. But this homeless wanderer is of the loftier type of man, and he will sacrifice himself rather than disgrace what he loves. Loss is sometimes better than gain. Failure may be greater and finer than success. He sees that this innocent girl is beloved by a youth of her own station, and with delicate artifice he will contrive their betrothal, and will pass gayly into the shadow of death. The play was a dramatic exposition, done with a free hand, of romantic self-sacrifice. The acting of Ada Rehan had not been more flexible at any time than it was in that character. She wore the masculine garb with ease, and as the temperament of such a lover as *Mockworld* would be feminine and very sweet and tender she readily assumed his nature. The embodiment was a lovely image of wild-wood freedom, elastic in demeanor, beautiful in visage and in speech, sweetly suffused with kindly cynicism, and showing the face of a sublime sor-

row, radiant with the smile of that tender submission which is perfect triumph.

And that point contains the sum of thoughts that are prompted by the subject. It is a common opinion, and sometimes it finds expression, that any person who is self-possessed, and is able to deliver language in an effective manner, is, therefore, able to act. There could not be a greater delusion. Self-possession in the presence of an audience, which obviously is essential, comes by experience, but elocution will not make an actor. It is a useful and a charming accomplishment, but in the art of acting it is of secondary importance. The first qualification for an actor is the faculty of getting inside a character, giving to it a body and presenting it as a truth. Ada Rehan was excellent, even among the best, as a speaker of English, whether verse or prose; yet, though her elocution had been defective, her signal dramatic ability would have remained unimpaired. Just as, in a dramatic composition, the quality that makes it a play and not a narrative is a quality neither literary nor philosophical, neither analytical nor poetic, so in a dramatic performer the quality that makes the actor is neither scholarship, nor logic, nor eloquence, nor ingenuity, but a certain power of being something and doing something which converts words into actions and constructs before the eyes of the spectator a moving picture of human life, with its background of materialism and its atmosphere of

spiritual mystery. That power of being and doing is the soul of the Stage. Those persons who possess it, and those alone, touch the heart, arouse the imagination, and justify, and dignify, and advance the profession of the actor. In that large body of writing which is called dramatic criticism, and which has been created and copiously augmented by the futile literary industry of more than two hundred years, it is astonishing to observe how little thought the reader is able to discover that goes to the question of what the actor does and of how he does it. For one page about what Garrick actually did, in any one of Shakespeare's characters, the searcher can find a hundred about what Shakespeare possibly meant. For one writer like Cibber or Tom Davies, who tells much, he can find fifty like Tom Brown and Anthony Pasquin, who tell practically nothing; yet were it not for what the actor contributes,—investing with a body that soul which the author has conceived,—the part of wisdom would be to stay at home and read the play in peace, at a comfortable fireside. It is that which makes certain men and women great in what otherwise would be an idle mimicry of serious and substantial things, and it is because they are great, in the possession and exercise of that power, that the study of their witchcraft is worthy of intellectual attention while it is at hand and worthy to be seized and commemorated, if possible, before it drifts away. In the presence of such women as Ellen Terry

and Ada Rehan,—representative actresses of England and America,—philosophers, statesmen, and poets dwindle into comparative insignificance in immediate popular interest. That may be strange, but it is true; and it would cease to be strange if the character, methods, and purpose of the dramatic faculty, together with the enchantment which invests a beautiful woman to whom nature has given it, were more intelligently studied and better understood.

IV.

DAVID WARFIELD.

1866—19—.

AMONG contemporary actors one of the most conspicuous is David Warfield, a man of exceptional talent and respectable artistic achievement. An effort, manifestly absurd and injudicious, has been made to obtain recognition for him as being "another Joseph Jefferson": "Save us from our friends!" Joseph Jefferson was one of the greatest actors that ever lived,—a poetic genius and a consummate artist. His method was as fine as a silk thread and as firm as a strand of wrought steel. No deeper feeling, no more sensitive imagination, no finer, more delicate nature, has been manifested by any actor seen on our Stage in the last sixty years or recorded in the long annals of the Theatre. Mr. Warfield, as an actor, has shown a pleasant personality; an affable disposition; a gentle manner; sympathy with sweet, fine feeling; fervid emotion; capability of pathos; and a sure touch in the realm of domestic drama. The subjects which he has illustrated are, with one exception, homely reflections of common life. He has displayed force, not power, and of poetic feeling and

imagination he has given no denotement. He is no more worthy to be named with Joseph Jefferson than Martin Tupper is worthy to be named with Alfred Tennyson.

Mr. Warfield was born in San Francisco, California, on November 28, 1866. He began theatrical life as a programme boy, in the Standard Theatre of that city. Later he became an usher, at the Bush Street Theatre there. His first professional appearance was made as a member of a travelling theatrical company at Napa, California, in 1888, as the specious, rascally Jew, *Melter Moss*, in "The Ticket-of-Leave Man." That company was disbanded at the end of one week, and thereafter Mr. Warfield appeared at several San Francisco variety halls, and in a piece called "About Town," and gave imitations of actors whom he had seen,—among them Tommaso Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt,—and of "types" that he had observed in the streets of his native city. In 1890 he removed to New York and obtained professional employment, for a short time, in Paine's Concert Hall, in Eighth Avenue. His next engagement was to act *Hiram Joskins*, in a play called "The Inspector," produced by Mr. William A. Brady: that employment lasted two months. In March, 1891, he performed as *Honora*, in "O'Dowd's Neighbors," in a company led by Mark Murphy. In the season of 1891-'92 he acted with Russell's Comedians, under the management of

John H. Russell, appearing as *John Smith*, in "The City Directory." In 1892-'93 he was seen as *Washington Littlehales*, in "A Nutmeg Match." In September, 1895, he became associated with the New York Casino Theatre, where he remained for three years, acting in "About Town," "The Merry Whirl," "In Gay New York," and "The Belle of New York,"—pieces which are correctly described as medleys of tinkling music and nonsense. In those "entertainments," frivolous and often vulgar, Mr. Warfield presented several variations of substantially the same identity,—an expert semblance of the New York East Side Jew. In 1898 he joined the burlesque and travesty company managed by Messrs. Weber and Fields, at their theatre in Broadway, between Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth Streets, New York. At that house he appeared in various rough and commonplace travesties of contemporary theatrical successes, generally presenting, in different lights, his photographic copy of the huckstering, acquisitive, pusillanimous Jew of low life. One notable variation of that type was his assumption of *The Old Man*, in a burlesque of the offensive play of "Catherine." Among the salient characteristics of his acting, in whatever parts he played, were fidelity to minute details of appearance and demeanor and consistent and continuous preservation of the spirit of burlesque,—a spirit which combines imperturbable gravity of aspect with apparently profound sincerity in pre-

posterous situations and while delivering extravagant, ludicrous speeches.

In 1901 Mr. Warfield had the good fortune to form a professional alliance with Mr. David Belasco, who presented him in a frail drama, called "The Auctioneer," by Charles Klein and Lee Arthur. That vehicle was utilized for his professional industry during three years. In 1904 he was prominently brought forward in a play called "The Music Master," written by Mr. Charles Klein and revised by Mr. Belasco, and on that play, which proved exceptionally popular, he relied, exclusively, for the ensuing three years. On October 16, 1907, Mr. Belasco produced a play written by himself, in association with Pauline Phelps and Marion Short, called "A Grand Army Man," in which Mr. Warfield acted the principal part. That production signalized the opening of the Stuyvesant Theatre, now (1912) called the Belasco. Mr. Warfield acted there, in "A Grand Army Man," until February 22, when "The Music Master" was revived. During a subsequent tour of the country both those plays were presented, but "The Music Master," proving more remunerative than the newer play, became again his sole professional reliance. On January 2, 1911, a play called "The Return of Peter Grimm," written by Mr. Belasco, announced as based on a suggestion by Mr. William C. De Mille, was produced in Boston. On October 18, 1911, that play was presented for the first time

in New York, at the Belasco Theatre—Mr. Warfield acting the central part. Mr. Warfield has devoted himself during the season of 1912-'13 to presentation of "Peter Grimm" throughout the country. He has, many times, publicly signified ambition and intention to produce "The Merchant of Venice," and to act *Shylock*,—a part to which he may prove equal, but for the suitable embodiment of which he has not, as yet, shown the slightest qualification. Few actors, in any period, have received such abundant monetary remuneration as it has been Mr. Warfield's good fortune to obtain. He is, besides, reputed to be the owner of many "moving picture theatres" which earn large profits.

"THE MUSIC MASTER."

On September 26, 1904, Mr. Warfield appeared at the Belasco Theatre, New York (formerly the Republic and now, 1912, again so designated), in "The Music Master" and, by a performance of deep sincerity and exceptional merit, gained the most substantial success of his professional life.

The play is not remarkable for either originality of design or felicity of construction, but it is pure in spirit, interesting in story, picturesque in setting, and healthful in influence, and it was apparent, from the first, that it would have a long and prosperous career. It was announced as having been written by Mr. Charles Klein. It is, in fact, a patchwork, based to

some extent on a play by Felix Morris (1847-1900) called "The Old Musician," and worked over by David Belasco, with a distinctly perceptible infusion of dramatic expedients from that fine old play "Belphégor, or the Mountebank." The central person, *Herr Anton von Barwig*, the Music Master, is a German musician, of a familiar type,—peculiar but attractive; impassioned but gentle; droll but piteous; fervid but patient; an image of moral dignity and self-sacrifice,—and the posture of situations and incidents that have been utilized for his presentment shows him as a loving father, occupied, under conditions of almost sordid adversity, in a quest for his daughter, whom an unworthy wife and mother has taken from him, flying, with a paramour, from Germany to the United States. That daughter, at last, he finds and, under conditions cruel to himself, practically befriends, by keeping the secret of her paternity. The conspicuous attributes of this person,—attributes blended and woven beneath a serio-comic surface of foreign manner and broken English,—are, intrinsically (of course, with variant investiture), those that have long endeared such characters as *Michonnet*, *Triplet*, *Mr. Peggotty*, *Caleb Plummer*, and *Doctor Primrose*; the attributes, namely, of love, charity, fidelity, fortitude, patience, humor, simplicity, spontaneous goodness, and an unconscious grace equally of conduct, manner, and thought. The purpose,



From a Photograph by Otto Sarony Co.

In the Collection of the Author.

DAVID WARFIELD

as

Herr Anton von Barwig, in "The Music Master."

manifestly, was to place an eccentric, gentle, affectionate, humorous, and somewhat forlorn elderly man in a predicament of sad circumstance, and in that way to arouse pity and stimulate the promptings of charitable impulse. That purpose was accomplished; and, while the play is neither novel with invention, potent with strong dramatic effect, nor brilliant with polished dialogue, it possesses the solid worth of fidelity to simple life, the charm of diversified character, and the beauty of deep, tender, human feeling.

It was a wise choice which chose to combine those attributes into a stage figure, and Mr. Warfield,—finding himself liberated, mind and heart, into a congenial character, made this figure a vital emblem of heroism and paternal affection—not insipid, not effusive, but piquant with involuntary humor and decisive with well-governed emotion. In earlier performances this comedian was almost exclusively photographic; but time, study, thought, and practice,—the forces that constitute experience,—gradually expanded and ripened his art, and in this performance (when repetition had eliminated excessive nervous trepidation and made it “a property of easiness”) he showed intuitive insight and was deeply pathetic. That is success; for the higher purpose of acting a play is not proclamation of the talents of an actor, but liberation and enforcement of the utmost of beneficial influence upon an audience that a play contains. Mr. Warfield conquered by the

two great virtues of simplicity and sincerity. The principal defects in the personation—defects conspicuous in all Mr. Warfield's acting—were a hard, metallic voice and a poor method of elocution. The best dramatic expedient in the play is that by which the father's dubious, inchoate recognition of the daughter is confirmed. At that point and in the sequent situation, "lifted" from "Belphégor," Mr. Warfield evinced sympathetic delicacy and tempestuous fervor. The closing scenes of the play are marred by episodes of irrelevant incident and by prolixity, obscurity, and artifice, in the long-drawn passage of parental and filial reconciliation, which, indeed, require but a glance.

"A GRAND ARMY MAN."

On October 16, 1907, Mr. Belasco opened the Stuyvesant Theatre, and Mr. Warfield, appearing in "A Grand Army Man," gave a strong, sympathetic, tender, touching performance of an old soldier who is subjected to an afflicting domestic experience. The play presents neither surprising ingenuity of construction nor uncommon felicity of style, but it tells a plain story in a plain way. The chord that is struck in it is that of romantic, almost paternal, altogether manly, and beautiful affection. As a work of dramatic art it appertains to the class of comedies represented by such plays as "Grandfather Whitehead," "The Porter's Knot," and "The Chimney Corner,"—plays in

which the theme involves unselfish love and the sentiments and emotions that cling to the idea of home. In that respect it reverts to a style of drama once, fortunately, dominant—at a time when the American Stage was illumined and adorned by such actors as Henry Placide, John Gilbert, John Nickinson, Charles W. Coudock, William Warren, and Mark Smith. The authors of it, David Belasco, Pauline Phelps, and Marion Short, provided Mr. Warfield with a vehicle of dramatic expression that exactly conforms to the bent of his mind. The plot is simple, but by reason of being natural and being fraught with true, as opposed to false, emotion, its simplicity nowhere declines into insipid commonplace. The chief character, *Wes' Bigelow*, is a veteran of the Grand Army of the Republic. He has never been married. In youth he has loved a girl, but has not won her, and she has become the wife of one of his comrades. Years have passed, and the American Civil War has occurred. That comrade has been killed in battle. The widow has died: but she has left a son, that comrade's boy, and *Bigelow* has adopted and reared him. The substance of the play is his experience with the fortunes of that ward.

It happens sometimes that a man whom a girl has rejected, and who remains unmarried because of his absorbing love for her, will fix his affection on her child,—she having married a more favored suitor and

produced a family,—and will love that child as if it were his own. That happens to *Bigelow*. The son of his loved and lost idol is the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart. There is no labor that he will not do, and no sacrifice that he will not make, for the lad, of whom he ardently prophesies success and honor. The boy, *Robert*, has been intrusted with money, the property of the Grand Army veterans, and, instead of placing it in the bank, as directed to do, he has used it in speculation, and lost it. When the knowledge of that fault comes to the veteran he is, at first, stunned by it; then enraged; and then broken by the conflict betwixt the sense of shame and the struggle of affection. He tries to thrash the boy with a horsewhip, but in that manifestation of wrath he fails: his cherished pet cannot have done wrong; has only erred through accident; can surely be redeemed; must, of course, make amends,—and all will be well. The case comes to trial, before a judge who, privately, is hostile to *Bigelow*, and measures are taken to insure conviction. The veteran offers to replace the money that has been used by his ward,—supposing that the complaint will then be dismissed. That money he has obtained by sale of his personal effects, and also by means of a mortgage imposed on his farm. The old soldier makes an impassioned, pathetic appeal to the court, but the hostile magistrate cannot be appeased. *Robert* is convicted and is sent to prison for one year. A little

time passes, and *Robert's* sweetheart, the daughter of the malicious judge, leaves her father's abode and seeks refuge with *Bigelow* and the kind old woman who keeps house for him. *Robert* is pardoned, at the intercession of the veteran's military comrades, and he comes home, to his guardian and his love, on New Year's Day.

Nothing could be more simple than that unpretentious idyl of home. It is in situations of simplicity, however, that an actor is subjected to the most severe test of his inherent power, his fibre of character, his knowledge of the human heart, his store of experience, his resources of feeling, and his artistic faculty of expression. Mr. Warfield endured that test, allowing the torrent of feeling to precipitate itself without apparent restraint, and, at the same time, to control and guide it. Such artistic growth he had evinced in his impersonation of the *Music Master*, and he evinced it even more effectively in his assumption of the *Grand Army Man*,—going to Nature for his impulse, and obeying a right instinct of art in his direction of it. In the portrayal of the noble, sweet-tempered yet fiery old soldier he aimed especially at self-effacement, at abnegation of every motive or trait of selfishness. On finding that his boy loves the daughter of his enemy, and is by her beloved, the veteran is, almost at once, disposed to placate that enemy and favor those young lovers. There is, to be sure, a little reluctance, a little struggle in his mind; but that is soon over. The actor

denoted that struggle and that surrender in a lovely spirit. In the tempestuous scene of *Bigelow's* horrified consternation, the agonizing conflict between anger and love, when the misconduct of the boy is exposed and confessed, and the old man, after trying to beat him as a felon, clasps him to his heart as only the victim of an unfortunate, venial error, the anguish and the passionate affection of a strong, even splendid, nature were expressed with cogent force. The appeal spoken in the courtroom,—an outburst of honest, simple, rugged eloquence, all the more fervid and poignant because unskilled and fettered,—had the authentic note of heartfelt emotion. In circumstance those situations, which are the pivotal points of the play, recall certain supreme effects in “*Olivia*” and “*The Heart of Mid-Lothian*,” but Mr. Warfield’s treatment of those situations was fresh, and his achievement in them displayed him as an actor to whom the realm of pathos is widely open, and who can tread with a sure footstep in the labyrinth of the domestic emotions,—one of the most perplexing fields with which dramatic art is concerned. All observers know how easy it is, in treatment of themes of the fire-side, the family, the home, to lapse into tameness. An actor must possess an ardent and beautiful spirit, and must be greatly in earnest, who can sustain such themes and invest them with the glow of passionate life. Neither this part nor any other that Mr. Warfield has assumed, except *Peter Grimm*, involves the

supreme faculty of imagination or impinges on the domain of poetry. Edwin Booth—Joseph Jefferson—Henry Irving—they are all dead. Let us have sense and justice: let no enthusiast of a button-making theatrical period fall into the delusion that the empty throne has been filled. Mr. Warfield is a capital actor, but, while he has shown fine power and done fine things, he has not yet attained the summit of eminence as an imaginative actor. There is still much to be achieved.

“The heights that great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward, in the night.”

“THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM.”

In drama, whether prose or verse, the device has frequently been used of bringing back to our material world the spirits of persons who have passed out of mortal life, and causing them to pervade the scenes with which they were associated in the body. That device is employed in “The Return of Peter Grimm,” in which Mr. Warfield made his first and, thus far, his only approach to the realm of imagination. *Peter Grimm*, a prosperous, self-willed, kind, good old man, who in the government of his family and the arrangement of his worldly affairs has made serious errors,—the most deplorable of them being the separation of his ward from a youth who loves her and whom she loves,

and her betrothal to his nephew, a hypocrite and a scoundrel,—is suddenly stricken dead, of heart disease, and, after a little time, his spirit returns to the place which was his earthly home, intent on retrieving those errors, discomfiting the rascal by whom he has been deceived, and making his foster-child happy. Mr. Warfield, personating *Peter Grimm*, first presented him as a mortal, afterward as a spirit. The character,—honest, sturdy, opinionated, worldly-wise, somewhat rough and imperious, yet intrinsically genial,—was correctly assumed and expressed, but the actor's denotement of spiritual being was neither imaginative nor sympathetic, and it did not create even the slightest illusion.

The purpose of the dramatist seems to have been to intimate a notion, comfortable to the general mind, that spiritual existence of beings once mundane is merely a continuation of their everyday condition in this world. In the absence of knowledge on the subject that assumption is as tenable as any other. Persons who are commonplace in what we call Time may reasonably be held to remain commonplace in what we call Eternity. No one knows. The Book of Destiny has not been opened. But the rationality of assumption which makes of "that undiscovered country" only a prolongation of this earthly scene at once dissipates, especially for dramatic purpose and effect, all atmosphere of spirituality, all glamour of the ideal, which happily might be super-

induced by imaginative treatment of a mysterious subject. However prosaic the quality of a disembodied spirit may remain, it seems reasonable to assume that there must be some essential difference between the material body and the spiritual body, and the person undertaking to represent a spirit could only succeed, if at all, in denoting that difference not by stage tricks but by mental power, and affluence of emotion, by weird strangeness of individuality, by exquisite sensibility, by magnetism, and by the artistic skill to liberate those forces and so elicit and control the sympathy of his auditors. Mr. Warfield's personation of *Grimm* gave not the faintest intimation of spirituality, and there was not one gleam of imagination in his presentment of the spirit.

Few actors have ever succeeded in conveying to an audience any really convincing, absorbing sense of spiritual presence. The dramatist of "Peter Grimm" probably did not intend that any such sense should be conveyed. Mr. Warfield, apparently, did not attempt to convey it, and if, as appears true, it was the actor's purpose to present *Grimm* as essentially the same person after death as before, then his personation, undoubtedly, was the rounded result of a definite plan, and was, as such, entirely successful.

The part of *Peter Grimm* has been described as one of great difficulty. It is, on the contrary, very easy. Its requirement is sincerity. *Grimm*, as a spirit, clothed

as in mortal life, must move among persons who were his friends and acquaintances, unseen by them, unheard when he speaks, eagerly desirous to influence their conduct, but practically helpless to do so, except at moments when accession of extreme sensibility on the part of one or another of them provides occasion, until, at last, force of circumstance and the impelling guidance of the dead man achieve his purpose. Acted in the spirit precisely as in the flesh, as a good old man, the part makes no draft upon the resources of mind and feeling or upon the faculty of expression that any good actor might not easily satisfy. The situations wherein *Grimm*, ostensibly, is ignored by the other persons on the stage in fact revolve around him and are dependent on his presence; he engages the sympathy of the audience practically to the exclusion of all the other characters, and the almost universal interest—whether assenting or dissenting—in anything relating directly to the theme of spiritual survival after death, together with the novelty of a ghost displayed in the environment of everyday, centres observation on *Grimm* and his personator.

Mr. Warfield's performance, notwithstanding the prosaic atmosphere of it, was interesting, and his excursion into the realm of the occult was, at least, calculated to stimulate thought on a serious subject. In this, as in many other matters, the degree of approval gained by the play and its performance will ever be variably

accordant to taste. To some persons, no doubt, the ideal of a newly dead child being borne away on his spirit-uncle's shoulders, singing about "Uncle Rat has gone to town to buy his niece a wedding gown," and musically inquiring, "What shall the wedding breakfast be? Hard boiled eggs and a cup of tea?" will be delightful. Others, equally without doubt, will fail to find it impressive.

V.

FRANK WORTHING.

1866—1910.

FRANCIS GEORGE PENTLAND, who was known to the Stage as Frank Worthing, and who was admired and honored as one of its foremost and best representatives, died suddenly, just within the stage-door of the Garrick Theatre, Detroit, Michigan, on December 27, 1910, of hemorrhage from the stomach. His health had been for a considerable period impaired and his condition frail. Indeed, during the last two years of his life he had survived chiefly because of his resolute endurance. He fully realized his physical weakness and knew that his hold upon life was slender, but he was a brave, gallant gentleman; he would not burden his friends with anxiety for his welfare or cause any distress that could be averted; he was reticent: he kept his troubles to himself, and he had determined to meet the inevitable summons, undaunted, at whatever time it might come,—remaining in the active practice of his profession, and falling at the post of duty. That purpose he fulfilled, dying as he would have wished to die, stanch and faithful to the last.

The life of an actor is less eventful in our time

than often it was in those old days before the profession of Acting obtained the almost universal recognition which it now enjoys, and when such a man as Edmund Kean was compelled, in the course of his travels, to swim across a river, carrying his clothing in a bundle on his head; but it is a busy and toilsome life, and it is attended by much vicissitude. The story of Frank Worthing's life is a story of persistent, continuous professional labor, prompted by honorable ambition and directed toward fulfilment of a high ideal. Mr. Worthing was a native of Scotland, born at Edinburgh, October 12, 1866. He was educated at Hunter's School, in Edinburgh, at the Royal High School there, and at the Edinburgh University. It was intended that he should follow the profession of medicine, and for some time his studies took that direction, but as he found himself exceedingly sensitive to those painful experiences which, in medical training, are unavoidable, he was eventually constrained to abandon that pursuit. In youth he joined an amateur theatrical club called the Edinburgh Dramatic Society, and his first appearance on the stage was made, during his membership of that club, for a benefit, in the farce of "Which Is Which?" When he adopted the stage as a profession he chose for himself the name of Frank Worthing, in order to avoid confusion of professional identity,—his brother, Nicol Pentland, having

already appeared as an actor. His adoption of the stage as a regular calling was due in part to the counsel and encouragement of Miss Olga Nethersole. His career as an actor began about 1884. He was early employed in the stock company directed by Sarah Thorne at Margate, and he there played many parts and gained useful experience. Later he acted in provincial travelling companies. At one time he had the good fortune to be associated with one of the companies of Henry Irving. Also he was fortunate in being a member of Charles Wyndham's company, and in association with that fine comedian he acted many parts, among them *Ivesson*, in Henry Arthur Jones's play of "The Bauble Shop"; *Captain Hazelfoot*, in "The Candidate," and *Captain Marchmont*, in "An Aristocratic Alliance"; and when touring in the provinces he played various parts that Wyndham had played in the metropolis. His first appearance on the London Stage was made, December 4, 1888, at the Jodrell Theatre, Great Queen Street, as *Mr. France*, in a play called "The Alderman," by James Morton. In 1889 he acted in London and in the provinces, with Milly Palmer (Mrs. Daniel E. Bandmann). In 1890 he was selected for leading man with Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who was at that time becoming conspicuous, and with her he acted *Orlando*,—a performance which, maturing as time passed, became the best seen on our Stage since the day of Walter Montgomery. A little

later he succeeded the accomplished Charles Coghlan as leading man in the company of Mrs. Langtry, and with that actress he performed as *Marc Antony*, *Claude Melnotte*, *Orlando*, *Lord Clancarty*, *Pygmalion*, and *Charles Surface*.

His success, at that time, had attracted attention and, at the request of Miss Olga Nethersole, he was engaged as a leading man, by the late Augustin Daly. The plan was that he should appear in this country with Miss Nethersole, but, much to his dissatisfaction and also to that of Miss Nethersole, soon after his arrival here the plan was changed. He left England September 22, 1894, and his first appearance in America was effected on October 15, that year, at Philadelphia, as *Sidney Austin*, in "Love on Crutches." Instead of being sent out with Miss Nethersole he had been transferred to Daly's company to play leading business with Ada Rehan. His first appearance at Daly's Theatre, New York, occurred on December 15, 1894, also as *Sidney Austin*, and from that time onward he was identified with the best industry and finest achievement of the American Stage. On February 25, 1895, at Daly's Theatre, he acted *Proteus*, in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona,"—Miss Rehan acting *Julia*,—and although *Proteus* is an unpleasant part he was surprisingly successful in it, contriving, as he did, to commend the character to some measure of sympathy by suggesting a volatile temperament rather than a base mind, and

by making the fever of passion seem a palliative for what is, in reality, a deceit. He remained with Daly's company until February, 1896, acting many and various parts, among them *Charles Surface*, *Duke Aranza*, in "The Honeymoon"; *Captain Keefe O'Keefe*, in "Nancy and Company"; *Demetrius*, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; *Orlando*, in "As You Like It," and *Captain von Vinck*, in "The Two Escutcheons." In their acting in the latter play Mr. Worthing and Miss Maxine Elliott were exceptionally fortunate, gaining signal success and much popularity. Both of them had found their positions irksome in Daly's company, and a little later they withdrew from it and, obtaining the play of "The Two Escutcheons," appeared in it, as "co-stars," at the Garden Theatre. On March 23, 1896, they performed at the Fifth Avenue Theatre,—Mr. Worthing playing *Ned Garland*,—in a play by Mr. Sydney Rosenfeld, called "A House of Cards." That venture failed, and Mr. Worthing and Miss Elliott then joined Mr. T. Daniel Frawley's stock company, in San Francisco. While leading man with that company Mr. Worthing acted many and widely contrasted parts. He appeared in Los Angeles as well as in San Francisco, made several tours of the Pacific slope, and also a professional visit to the Sandwich Islands.

In 1898 he returned to the East, and, on October 22, acted at the Garrick Theatre, New York, with Miss Annie Russell, in the play of "Catherine,"—

appearing as the *Duc de Coutras*. In that production the principal success was obtained by Mr. Worthing and Mrs. LeMoynes. In the following year he was leading man with Miss Blanche Bates, with whom he had been professionally associated in Mr. Frawley's stock company, in which Miss Bates became leading woman after the withdrawal of Miss Elliott, who went to Australia with Mr. N. C. Goodwin. On October 16, 1899, at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, Mr. Worthing acted *David Brandon*, in Mr. Zangwill's theatrical synopsis of his novel of "The Children of the Ghetto." On January 8, 1900, at the same theatre, he appeared as *Anthony Depew*, in Mr. Belasco's play of "Naughty Anthony,"—Miss Bates acting *Cora*. During that engagement he also appeared as *Lieut. Pickering*, in the original production of "Mme. Butterfly." On January 15, 1901, at the Bijou Theatre, in association with Miss Amelia Bingham, he appeared as *Richard Sterling*, in Clyde Fitch's photographic play of "The Climbers," and by his earnest, judicious, authoritative, finished acting he did much to insure its success. In 1902 and 1903 he played leading business with Julia Marlowe, acting in "The Queen Fiametta"—a piece which was dropped from Miss Marlowe's repertory when it became evident that Mr. Worthing had absorbed the entire public interest of its performance. He also acted *Captain Oliver*, in "The Cavalier." In the season of 1903-'04 he participated as *Rev. Dr.*

Clifton Bradford in the representation of the humorous and exceedingly amusing play by Augustus Thomas called "The Other Girl," and he gave one of the most expert and blithe light comedy performances that had brightened our Stage. In the season of 1904-'05 his skill was exerted, without profit, in the hopeless task of trying to redeem Pinero's silly and offensive play called "A Wife Without a Smile." On February 2, 1905, having assumed the position of leading man in a stock company organized by Mr. Walter Noah Lawrence, he acted at the Madison Square Theatre, as *Jack Temple*, in the droll, piquant, farcical comedy of "Mrs. Temple's Telegram."

In his next engagement Mr. Worthing was associated with Miss Margaret Anglin, on tour in a repertory; and at the Princess Theatre, New York, he appeared in "Zira,"—a variant of Wilkie Collins's "New Magdalen," in the construction and production of which he had a hand, associated with Mr. Henry Miller. On January 22, 1906, at Daly's Theatre, he acted *Vandervelt*, in "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt," by Mr. Alfred Sutro,—Miss Ellis Jeffreys playing *Lady Clarice*,—and of that part he gave a notably piquant, quizzical, sparkling performance. Soon after that time he appeared for a brief season with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in London. In 1906, at the Manhattan Theatre, Mr. Worthing appeared in Miss Grace George's production of "Clothes," and one night in that

engagement he seriously injured himself when falling backward down a flight of stairs, as required by the business of the scene. Mr. Worthing remained with Miss George after that play was taken "on the road." On April 15, 1907, he acted *Henri des Prunelles*, in a new version of "Divorçons," made by Miss Margaret Mayo, and produced by William A. Brady, for Miss George, at Wallack's Theatre. His performance was one of exceptional merit, and, while the entire production was a success, Mr. Worthing's personation was finer than any of the performances associated with it. On February 22, 1909, still acting in association with Miss George, he appeared, at the Hackett Theatre, New York, as *Howard Stanton*, in "A Woman's Way,"—a character which, taken seriously, would be contemptible, but which, impersonated, as it was by him, in the mood of an amiable farceur, and made gracious with an ingenuous softness and a buoyant manner, became plausible, attractive, and deliciously droll. Later in the same year he appeared in "Is Matrimony a Failure?" and at the time of his death he was acting on the road, with Miss George, in Miss Geraldine Bonner's "Sauce for the Goose."

All that Mr. Worthing did on the stage was adequate to the technical requirements of his profession; much of it was admirable. He was a thoroughly conscientious actor. He never slighted any part that was assigned to him, unless, perhaps, it was that of *Orsino*,

in "Twelfth Night,"—a part which he disliked and which he was constrained to act against his will. Like most of the younger actors of his time, especially those of England, he was much under the influence of Henry Irving, whom he regarded with reverence, though he was not an imitator of him. He had studied the methods of Charles Wyndham and of Charles Coghlan, but he was original in mind, and eventually he formed and used a style of his own. He suffered extremely from nervous excitement, and that, together with his excessive use of tobacco, interfered at times with the perfect execution of his design,—especially on the occasion of a first performance. He possessed many natural advantages. He was tall and, although slightly eccentric in manner, he was graceful; he possessed inherent charm, refinement, and delicacy. The lower part of his face was expressive of extreme sensibility; the upper part was strong and noble. He had blue eyes, of unusual mobility, and abundant curling hair, which, becoming streaked with gray in his latter years, made his aspect exceedingly picturesque. So much in his art was excellent that it is difficult to specify what was best. He reached his supreme height as a light comedian. It would not be incorrect to name *Charles Surface* as the most representative of all his impersonations. He made that part sympathetic and winning, as well as merry and dashing, by reason of the fine, honest spirit, reckless, prodigal, and wild, but not

depraved, which he allowed to gleam through the extravagance of the character. Like all other exceptional actors, he varied considerably, but at his best he possessed, under absolute control, the rare and charming faculty of giving emphasis to a mirthful situation or a merry thought, by perfect gravity of demeanor, by a comically demure aspect of innocence, and, when he spoke, by a delicious drollery of vocal inflection. Like the fine comedian Lester Wallack,—whom, more than any other actor of his time, he resembled, and with whom, more than any other actor of his time, he bore comparison,—he possessed a wonderfully sustained flow of whimsical vivacity and blithe animal spirits, combined with spontaneous elegance of demeanor; and he could, to an extraordinary degree, impart piquant significance to even half a line or an interjected word,—as when *Charles Surface*, replying to *Sir Oliver's* half boastful, half regretful remark, “We shall never see such figures of men again,” archly ejaculates, “I hope not!” Furthermore, he could express sentiment and tenderness without effusive display, and in a way to excite sympathy and prompt the auditor’s mind to serious thought.

When Mr. Worthing made his first appearance in America, acting *Sidney Austin*, in “Love on Crutches,” he succeeded to the place in Daly’s company which had been occupied by the favorite comedian John Drew, and, within a short time, by reason of attractive per-

sonality and efficient art, he had gained for himself a warm place in public esteem. He was from the first recognized as an actor of refinement, sensibility, keen intelligence, and various and decisive talents. On the occasion of his first appearance at Daly's Theatre his acting manifested extreme agitation,—not surprising when it is considered that he then made his advent as a member of the leading theatrical company in the capital city of a foreign land,—but the effect of his personation of *Sidney Austin* was delightful. The farcical comedy of "Love on Crutches" ridicules false sentiment, and the expedients employed in it are those of satire and comic situation. Some of the incidents of that play are extravagant,—that is to say, they are comically discordant with probability; nevertheless the play is a picture of manners and the tone of it is pure and bright. Merriment is created in the presentment of it by a portrayal of evanescent matrimonial disquietude sequent on the fact that a young husband and a young wife, who have married for social, conventional reasons rather than because of love, are secretly engaged in a sentimental correspondence with each other,—each supposing the other to be a stranger. Since the first presentment of Sardou's "Henriette" (in the far distant days of Wallack's Theatre, about 1860), afterward called "A Scrap of Paper," nothing of the kind had been more entertaining than was the second act of "Love on Crutches," as acted by

Ada Rehan, Frank Worthing, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, and James Lewis. Mr. Worthing's performance, utilizing and blending, with rare facility, the methods of farce and comedy, his subtle delineation of the sentimentalist merging into the honestly jealous husband who has discovered that he loves his wife, was coherent, symmetrical, firm, and highly effective, and it launched the actor on a prosperous American career, which proceeded in success up to the day of his death.

In his impersonation of *Charles Surface* Mr. Worthing, as already intimated, gave the finest performance of his career. His ideal of *Charles* was correct,—a graceful, gay young fellow, reckless, generous, and wild, but without a taint of vice in his composition,—and his performance was remarkable for the even sustinment of an assumed personality and for fluency of expression. His fine, mobile face greatly aided him in that performance. He took much care with every detail of it—more than with any other part that he ever played. He wore his own hair, with a back piece worked in, and the head powdered. Every article of his costume was immaculately clean and scrupulously arranged. It was a custom of his to wear fresh violets when acting *Charles Surface*,—a custom which brought him into conflict with his arbitrary manager, Augustin Daly, whose rules forbade the wearing or use of real flowers on his stage. Mr. Worthing's object, which was as nearly attained as it could be in a play of which

the essence is an atmosphere of studied artificiality, was to present a veritable human being, and by the right artistic expedients,—delicate exaggeration, studied but seemingly spontaneous movement, judicious pause, inflection, facial play,—to create the effect of Nature. In doing that he was more successful in the part of *Charles Surface* than any actor who had preceded him in it on our Stage in many years. He had neither the golden voice nor the exquisite grace of Charles Coghlan, but he had equal authority and he manifested in the part a finer spirit. He greatly excelled his immediate predecessors,—such as John Drew, Kyrle Bellew, George Clarke,—and the best of his successors, among whom may be mentioned Charles Richman and Otis Skinner, and his performance of *Charles Surface* was in every way equal to that of Lester Wallack, and, by reason of the absence of self-consciousness, preferable to it. Most actors who attempt to play *Charles Surface* make painfully obvious the fact that they are attacking a part in Old English Comedy which is incrustated with tradition, and are endeavoring, more or less successfully, to assume a manner harmonious with the period of powder and patches, and are eagerly desirous of winning applause for their expertness in doing it. Mr. Worthing produced the effect of being entirely unconscious equally of his dress, his appearance, and his manner, yet in reality he did not, even for a moment, relax his vigilant attention to every



From a Photograph by Morrison, Chicago.

In the Collection of the Author.

FRANK WORTHING

as

Charles Surface, in "The School for Scandal."

detail or lapse from the character, so that his performance created and sustained the ever delightful effect of being spontaneous, involuntary, absolutely natural. He was one of the few representatives of *Charles Surface* who have spoken correctly the vitally significant speech "No, hang it! I'll never part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep *his* picture while I've a room to put it in!"—a speech in which, for some inscrutable reason, most actors emphasize the word "picture."

Mr. Worthing, happily, was not universally admired,—for universal admiration is a tribute not accorded except to men who are level with the mass of mankind. His peculiarities were marked, his personality was strong, his superiority to the common herd inveterate, and therefore he could not, and did not, escape animosity—sometimes bitterly severe in its expression. That fact, however, testifies to his originality and sincerity. No doubt he might have improved his acting in some respects by carefully studying all objections made to it and heeding the judicious part of those objections, if any such part existed. Far too much press attention, however, was devoted to comment on his peculiarities,—which some commentators were pleased to call "mannerisms,"—and often far too little attention was given to his ideals of character and to his extraordinary technical proficiency of expression.

Mr. Worthing was a gentleman by nature as well

as by birth. He recognized the dignity of personal reticence and he observed it in his conduct. There was no affectation in him, no assumption of superiority or importance. He was simple, unassuming, gentle, and kind. He had positive convictions on all subjects that interested him, but even with intimate friends, though he would discuss those subjects and express those convictions with force and fluency when occasion required, he preferred to listen rather than to speak. He was closely observant. He was greatly liked by persons of taste and discernment. By many persons he was dearly loved. He was keenly susceptible to kindness. Women admired him and he greatly valued their approval. His feeling toward them was chivalrous, his conduct deferential. He could easily be led by sound counsel, if it were presented to him with kindness and fortified by reasons: he could not be moved in any other way. He thoroughly understood and deeply respected the art of Acting. He had a good opinion of his own abilities, knowing himself to be a fine actor, but he was modest and he was aware of his limitations. To the trivial celebrity of being a "star," under modern conditions, he was indifferent. He chose to make his path where he could accomplish the most of true success in his profession. His experience of life was ample. He was not unacquainted with sorrow. He bore suffering with fortitude and patience. His influence was strong in the direction of right. He

carried into the Present the sound traditions and more thorough methods of an earlier period of the Stage, and his every appearance was a demonstration of the superiority of trained ability over mere youth and assurance. The Stage lost in him an excellent general actor and the best light comedian of the day, and society lost a good and amiable man. His friends will long remember and deeply deplore a dear comrade, whom to know was to love. So, one by one, the lights go out and the brilliant figures vanish from the scene, and it is strangely left for hands grown old and tremulous in the service of the Theatre to bring the tribute of commemoration to youth stricken in its prime of hope and purpose.

CYPRESS.

[The *Elegy* for Worthing, written by me on January 3, 1911, a few days after his death, expresses for other hearts as well as mine the affection that he inspired and the spirit in which he is remembered.—W. W.]

No roses now, nor anything of bloom,

But only here

One leaf of sorrow on his early tomb,

Wet with a tear!

Not laurel for a life which, being his,

Was simply true,—

But only this sad cypress bough, which is

The sign of rue!

He was a creature of that substance fine,

Gentle and sweet,

In which man's will and woman's heart combine

And are complete.

THE WALLET OF TIME

He is at rest—too early for our sake,
But 'tis a rest
That his worn spirit often wished to take,
And so 'tis blest.

We talk of things accomplished by his art,—
The thought—the plan,—
But, oh, the thing most precious to our heart
Was just the man!

We cared not whether he was harshly chid
Or won applause;
We dearly loved him, not for what he did,
But what he was.

Yet what he did was lovely, and our thought
Will ever run
That much by him, who had so deftly wrought,
Might still be done.

What matter now, though Memory may deplore
Or may rejoice?—
We shall not ever see him any more,
Or hear his voice.

Something is wrested from us, far more dear
To love than fame;
And never life, with him no longer here,
Can be the same.

Farewell, old friend! upon thy sacred sleep
I lay this bough
Of mourning cypress, which will ever weep,
As I do now!

VI.

MAUDE ADAMS.

1872—19—.

MAUDE ADAMS, whose family name is Kiskaden, was born at Salt Lake City, Utah, on November 11, 1872. Her mother, Annie A. Adams, now retired, was at one time well known on the Stage. Her father, James Kiskaden, was a business man, resident in the city of her birth. She was carried on the stage when only nine months old, in a play called "The Lost Child," at the Salt Lake Theatre, Salt Lake City, and that was her first appearance. At the age of five she appeared at the Bush Street Theatre, San Francisco, in one of J. K. Emmet's "Fritz" plays. She attended school between the years 1878 and 1888. In the autumn of 1888 she came to New York, and on March 5, 1889, at the Bijou Theatre, appeared, as *Dot Bradbury*, in Charles Hoyt's farce of "A Midnight Bell," and she has since been in almost continuous practice of the dramatic profession. In 1892 she was made leading woman in the company of the popular comedian John Drew, who, having retired from Augustin Daly's company, then began his career as a star.

Miss Adams pleased the public taste as *Suzanne*, in "The Masked Ball"; *Miriam Stuart-Dodge*, in "The Butterflies"; *Jessie Keber*, in "The Bauble Shop," and, especially, as *Dorothy Cruickshank*, in the sterling comedy of "Rosemary," perhaps the loveliest of the inventive, sympathetic plays of that original, accomplished dramatist Louis N. Parker. In 1897 she was created a "star" by Mr. Charles Frohman, and she made her first appearance in that capacity as *Lady Babbie*, in "The Little Minister," on September 13, at the Lafayette Square Opera House, Washington, D. C. Miss Adams is an actress of amiable personality and respectable talent. Her professional career has been a triumph of incarnate mediocrity. Beside *Lady Babbie* the principal vehicles of her professional exploitation,—in which her manager, Mr. Frohman, has labored with incessant assiduity,—have been *Juliet*, in "Romeo and Juliet"; *Reichstadt*, in "The Eaglet" ("L'Aiglon"); *Phæbe Throssell*, in "Quality Street"; *Pepita*, in "The Pretty Sister of José"; *Chicot*, in "The Jesters"; *Maggie Wylie*, in "What Every Woman Knows," and *Chanticler*, in Rostand's barnyard drama, so named. No actress has been more prosperous, and, considering the fine opportunities that have been provided for her, and making due allowance for her hard work, good intentions, and occasional felicity, no actress has risen to great prominence on the American Stage, in any period, possessing

so little intrinsic talent or having done so little to deserve position and reward.

"THE LITTLE MINISTER."

The popularity enjoyed by Maude Adams is kindred with that which was possessed about forty years ago by Maggie Mitchell, and it has been accorded to kindred acting. The innocent, artless, waif-like, almost elfin personality of Miss Adams is attractive, despite her nasal vocalism and "Down-East" manner, and she diffuses the charm of an ingenuous temperament. Imagination, passion, distinction, intellectual character, brilliancy, and force are not among her attributes, and consequently are not shown in her acting, but her half-rueful aspect and her gentle ways, now demurely serious and now gleefully buoyant, invest her theatrical proceedings with winning grace, so that to remember her performances is to think of an odd, quaint, brisk little creature, essentially feminine, prone to variable moods, and spontaneous in the expression of them.

Miss Adams appeared as *Lady Babbie*, in "The Little Minister," for the first time in New York, on September 27, 1897, at the Empire Theatre, and gained the most auspicious success of her professional career by her vivacious impersonation of Barrie's fantastic, half-elfish heroine. The character of *Babbie*, diluted and much changed from what it is in the original novel (for Barrie altered and enfeebled his

story, in the process of turning it into a play), is conformable, in many respects, to her temperament and her powers, and it enabled her to express, with engaging effect, impulse, pertness, perversity, caprice, discontent, mischief, longing, self-will, arch and tantalizing recklessness, and, in short, the manifold traits of wayward sweetness and charmingly irrational contradiction that make up the nature of an original, impetuous girl. To the emotional power of *Babbie*, as drawn in the novel, the actress could not give adequate expression, but that element, fortunately for her, was not involved in the play.

There are wonderfully fine things in Barrie's pages which are not even suggested in his drama,—such, for example, as the scene of the gypsy marriage, suddenly disclosed by a flash of lightning, in the night and beneath the black horror of an impending tempest; the escape of *Babbie* from the clutches of *Rob Dow*, at the moment when he is about to plunge her into the hidden well; and the parting speech of the *Minister*, from the brink of the raging torrent which seems certain to bear him to his death. Those and many kindred beauties of the novel could not be reproduced on the stage. The story has been made to yield a light domestic drama composed of a series of episodes, diversified by a few touches of romantic sentiment, and sprightly with playful humor. The scene in which *Babbie* becomes assured of her safety, on incidentally ascertaining that her

Scotch marriage with the *Minister* is valid, rises into comedy—by means of an adroit crib from one of the novels of Wilkie Collins—and provides a capital opportunity for a strong comedy actress. That crowning occasion was not utilized by Miss Adams, who, at that point, lapsed into frivolity and flutter. It is true that, while the shallows murmur, the deeps are dumb,—as the old familiar line says,—but, in acting, the deeps have a way of expressing themselves, when they happen to exist. Miss Adams and her associates, exploiting a neat but inadequate paraphrase of “The Little Minister,” gave a pretty and pleasing entertainment, but persons who wish thoroughly to understand and enjoy Barrie’s novel,—which is one of the deepest, sweetest, and most significant creations of modern fiction,—must turn to the book, not to the stage. Meanwhile the stage abstract or moving epitome of the novel contains enough of a story about love and its crosses, with the concomitants of character, incident, adventure, and suspense, to hold the eager attention of an audience; it is all sweet and pure; it is always welcome; and Miss Adams has presented “The Little Minister” many hundred times, and its presentment has earned several fortunes.

“ROMEO AND JULIET.”

On May 8, 1899, a production of “Romeo and Juliet” was accomplished at the Empire Theatre, New York, and Miss Adams presented herself as *Juliet*, while

William Faversham appeared as *Romeo*, and James K. Hackett emerged as *Mercutio*. The proceedings that evening were unusually sad proceedings, and it was not easy to comprehend either the motive that prompted them or the purpose that they were expected to serve. "Romeo and Juliet," indeed, is a great tragedy, and a great performance of it, probably, would impress many persons and redound to the credit of all concerned in effecting it. The design of giving such a performance,—the parts being cast to suitable actors and an important subject being treated with adequate ability,—could readily be understood: the plan of experimental fooling with one of the most difficult of Shakespeare's tragedies, the chief parts being cast to performers so entirely unsuited to them as Miss Adams, Mr. Faversham, and Mr. Hackett, seemed inexplicable. Vanity, which is the strongest of human passions, was, probably, at the basis of it,—as it is at the basis of almost everything: but, whatever may have been the impulse, there could be no doubt about the dire result. Mediocrity has seldom made a more injudicious endeavor or encountered a more decisive defeat.

The theme of "Romeo and Juliet" is idolatrous love predestined to ruin and misery, and therefore the play is saturated with passion and steeped in grief. Under ordinary circumstances love walks hand in hand with hope, traversing a field of flowers, beneath a blue sky and a golden sun. Under the circumstances devised in

this tragedy love walks hand in hand with sorrow, descending into a lonely and sterile place, over which the sky slowly darkens and a gray mist is drifted on a chill wind of death. Almost from its first word the play is over-brooded with a vague menace of deadly danger. Both the lovers are conscious of this presentiment; both are aware of "some consequence yet hanging in the stars," some baleful influence, remote but inerrant, which will inevitably impel them onward to despair and death, some subtle spirit of evil which they darkly know but which they are powerless to resist. The poet Byron glanced at this malevolent force, in that felicitous phrase of his "the fatal gift of beauty." Shakespeare, with a more expositive art, revealed it in this clear denotement of the fatal visitation of love,—not the rational, easy-going desire, part animal and part conventional, which passes for the sovereign emotion,—but that absorbing, consuming passion, stronger than death and more cruel than the grave, which, in its effect upon exceptional natures, has glorified literature with grandeur and pathos, and has touched the pageantry of human life with the sunset light of immortal beauty. A tragedy thus freighted with spiritual meaning can be adequately interpreted only by the power of genius, operating through the methods and with the agencies of poetry. Prosy persons, proficient in stage routine, can act well enough such parts as old *Capulet* and old *Montague*, *Lady Capulet* and the *Nurse*, *Paris* and

Benvolio, the explosive *Tybalt* and the didactic *Friar Lawrence*; but prosy persons cannot act *Romeo*, *Mercutio*, or *Juliet*. The modern drawing-room method will not answer here: *Romeo* without sensibility, passion, and power; *Mercutio* without brilliancy, charm, and sparkle; *Juliet* without the beauty that subdues, the glamour that enchants, the passion that enthralls, and the poetic personality that bewilders judgment and turns all life to fire and ecstasy,—they are impossible.

Romeo's passion is subjective: he loves being in love more than he loves any woman. In *Juliet* there is no subtlety: love changes her, at once, from girl to woman, and makes her strong and glorious in her power of self-devotion and sacrifice. *Mercutio* also, while superbly poetic, is splendidly true,—the consummate flower of comedy, making sunshine all the way, and dying with a jest on his lips and agony in his heart. To take Mr. Favershaw, Miss Adams, and Mr. Hackett out of conventional plays of the hour and suddenly launch them into Shakespeare was to subject them to a test that no observer acquainted with their previous performances and with Shakespearean requirements reasonably could have expected them to endure. Neither of them had shown imagination or reserves of deep feeling; neither of them had been accustomed to speak blank verse. Miss Adams, a delicate, seemingly fragile and febrile person, in the Potion Scene of *Juliet* might have been expected to supply a specimen of mild hysterics. That was feasible,



*From a Photograph by Byron.
In the Collection of the Author.*

Lady Babbie, in "The Little Minister."

MAUDE ADAMS

as

Juliet, in "Romeo and Juliet."



*From a Photograph.
In the Collection of the Author.*

and that was afforded. The individual charm of girl-like sincerity which is peculiar to Miss Adams swathed her performance of *Juliet* with an amiable, winning softness, eliciting sympathy and inspiring kindness. Beyond that there was nothing. Many school-girls, with a little practice, would play the part as well—and would be no more unlike it. Some of the part was whispered and some of it was bleated. The personality thus exhibited as that of *Juliet* was that of an intellectual young lady from Boston, competent in the mathematics and intent on teaching pedagogy. A Balcony Scene without passion, a Parting Scene without the delirium of grief, and a Potion Scene without power or pathos were the products of Miss Adams' dramatic art. Dr. Johnson's remark about the dancing bear is too familiar for repetition,—but repetition of it, in this case, would cover the whole ground. "Romeo and Juliet" was dropped from the repertory of Miss Adams after a brief tour.

"THE EAGLET."

The Duke of Reichstadt, son of Napoleon Bonaparte and his second consort, Marie Louise of Austria, was a frivolous young man, whose early exit from this vale of tears was said to have been caused by his incontinence. Fanny Elssler (she of the classic head, the dazzling white complexion, the shining, braided chestnut hair, the tall, lithe, perfect figure,—all grace and

strength,—and the enthralling charm) had been one of his intimate associates. He died at Schönbrunn, Austria, in the summer of 1832, at the age of twenty-one, leaving the memory of a pinchbeck royalty, a vapid character, and a wasted life. That shadow of a king is the central figure in Edmond Rostand's drama of "L'Aiglon," originally presented in Paris, March 15, 1900, and, after a trial week at Baltimore, produced, October 22, in English, at the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York. As Napoleon Bonaparte was called "the Eagle," his son is designated "the Eaglet." Hence the name of the play. Miss Maude Adams embodied, after her pretty fashion, the character of *Reichstadt*.

According to Rostand's play, *Reichstadt*, dwelling at Schönbrunn, under the supervision of *Metternich*, was incited by agents of the Bonapartists to attempt escape from Austrian custody and to assume the leadership of a conspiracy to seize the throne of France, then occupied by Louis Philippe. The project was frustrated partly because of the young man's inherent imbecility and partly because of the dexterity of his diplomatic custodians, dominated by the astute, expeditious *Metternich*. In the course of his pursuit of freedom and a crown *Reichstadt* reached the lonely battlefield of Wagram, and there, as a climax to his failure, he was overwhelmed with visions of horror,—the scenes of anguish that were precipitated, and the ghosts of men that were slaughtered, through the ruthless ambition

of his imperial father. Admonished by that experience, he besought celestial pardon for having undertaken to raise again the standard of war, and, on being conveyed back to his Austrian residence, he died, heart-broken, of pneumonia. This story has been set forth by Rostand in a series of pictures, deftly intertwined with a melodious text, composed mostly, in the original, of descriptions and apostrophes, but cut and condensed by Mr. Louis N. Parker, in a neat adaptation. There are various minor incidents, cleverly arranged and dispersed. *Reichstadt's* amatory proceedings are, somewhat comically, ascribed to subtle and ingenious supervisory influence, and the saltatory *Elssler* is revealed in the astonishing character of a Bonapartist sibyl, inciting the spineless *Duke* to seize the falchion and emulate the example of his illustrious parent. A dramatist, however, is justifiable in bending history to his purpose.

Rostand's bland imitation of Shakespeare can not be viewed with equal tolerance. The scene with the mirror is a variant from "King Richard II."; the scene of the spectres is a variant from "King Richard III."; the rebuke scene, between the *Duke* and his mother, is a variant from "Hamlet"; and throughout the portraiture of *Reichstadt* an effort is obvious to invest that nerveless, ambiguous, indecisive, fluctuative youth with the despondent temperament, the agonizing tremor, and the preordinate desolation of the haunted *Dane*. Rostand's

Reichstadt, indeed, has been designated "a French *Hamlet*." In like manner Klopstock was called "a German Milton"; and Coleridge, assenting, remarked that he was, indeed, "a *very German Milton*." Looking at the fibre of character,—whatever may have been the author's intention,—there is no resemblance between the *Duke of Reichstadt* (whether in fact or fiction) and the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare's play. *Hamlet* was irresolute because of his "large discourse of reason," and because his reason was overwhelmed by the awful mystery of man's spiritual environment. *Reichstadt* is irresolute because he is a paltry, effeminate boy, and,—to borrow *Hamlet's* pitying designation of what he most despised,—"a pipe for Fortune's finger to sound what stop she please."

The broadest, deepest, and finest study that has been made in literature of what can appropriately be called the poetical wreck of a royal life,—the utter failure and ruin, that is to say, of a weak but attractive character, set in a high place and enmeshed and overborne by the puissant adversity of hostile circumstances,—was made by Shakespeare, in "King Richard II." "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed the shadow of your face." For human beings, indeed, who do not possess power of will and capability of endurance, this world is made up of shadows. So much can be learned from "King Richard II." by those who have not learned it from experience. There was no need to reiterate the

moral. When a thing has once been thoroughly well done there would seem to be no good reason why it should be again attempted. It was natural, however, that a Gallic bard should aim to reanimate a French historic figure which certainly was picturesquely envired, and Rostand's choice of a subject was felicitous for his own land and people.

The period of the play is 1831-'32. It was in 1831 that the Duke of Reichstadt,—who had, in 1818, received his title from the Emperor of Austria,—was made a lieutenant-colonel commanding one of the Hungarian regiments of infantry, in Vienna. The foreground of the play shows the surveillance and tutelage under which he was restrained and made to live, and is artfully and well devised to inspire and sustain a feeling of suspense as to the possibility of his success in his project of escape. Bonapartist emissaries, disguised as a milliner and a tailor, obtain access to him. *Fanny Elssler* embraces him, and recounts the martial exploits of Napoleon. Wooden soldiers, the playthings of children, are utilized for the conveyance to him of a message of sympathy and a promise of support. He beseeches the *Austrian Emperor* for permission to return to France. His weakness and the futility of his Napoleonic ambitions are signified to him, with a fine, subtle, exasperating irony, by the polished *Metternich*, who, literally, “sets him up a glass, where he may read the inmost part of” an irresolute, feeble soul and mind,

and thereupon he dashes the mirror into fragments, and straightway, in a sort of paroxysm of hysterical resentment, plunges into conspiracy and shatters himself to pieces against the iron ramparts of a destiny of disaster. In the dreary night on the haunted field of Wagram he succumbs, and, after that, death speedily puts a period to his trouble, weakness, and grief. It is the tale of a miserable youth, shadowed forth in a series of episodical pictures. The incidents of the deathbed,—the production of the first Napoleon's iron camp bedstead and the gold cradle of the King of Rome, etc.,—are sorrowful, because such things point the moral of human vanity: "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." The scene on the haunted battlefield, following closely after Sardou's scene, for *Robespierre*, in the haunted prison of the Conciergerie, fine as it is, caused the effect of an echo. In that passage and in the Mirror Scene the formidable veteran Sarah Bernhardt, acting the part in Paris (and later in New York), put forth all the power of her impetuous nature and caused a striking effect of passionate excitement. Miss Adams also, at those points, created a tempest, but it was only a tempest in a teapot.

The characteristic attributes of *Reichstadt*, as shown in the play, being physical attenuation, mental lassitude, childish impatience, irritability of the nervous system, petulance of temper, a diseased fancy, morbid gloom,

and a general vacuity of being and frivolity of purpose, Miss Adams,—essentially a delicate, fragile actress, devoid of power and puny in style,—was able to give a fairly effective imitation of the author's ideal. A male character should not, in general, be assumed by a female. Few female performers have wholly succeeded in simulating masculine personality. Once in a while a woman has given on the stage a close imitation of a boy, in scenes of vivacity: Mrs. John Wood, Adelaide Neilson, and Ada Rehan, in particular, have done that, within a veteran's remembrance: but, in general, the woman pretending to be a man produces an impression of something unhealthful and unnatural. In the case of *Reichstadt*, the youth is effeminate and wayward, and Miss Adams so presented him. She did not, however, invest him with masculinity or personal charm. She was moderately effective in the Mirror Scene, but in that of the haunted battlefield,—which requires imaginative excitement, an emotion of terror, and a display of spasmodic force,—she was inadequate. The situation, however, carries itself. Despite her physical weakness, nasal utterance, indistinct articulation in rapid speech, and high, thin tones that cannot convey feeling, the vehemence of the little actress was inspiring. She was at her best in the scene of supplication and childlike blandishment with the old *Austrian Emperor*. The vein of Miss Adams is domestic and romantic—not tragic. She carried the Second Act of the play (which,

in point of comedy and of construction, is the best) with sustained vivacity and gratifying skill. The part, though somewhat insipid, does admit of occasional abandonment. Possessed of a gentle personality and capable of a piquant behavior, Miss Adams was a sprightly and bonnie lass in "The Little Minister," and that performance furnished the measure of her ability. As *Reichstadt* she gave an intelligent performance, on a commonplace level. It is idle to discuss the acting of Maude Adams as a manifestation of dramatic genius, or as an artistic display of anything finer or more important than the pretty water colors of an Italian fresco. She stands at about the altitude of *Catharine Moreland*, in Miss Austen's fine novel of "Northanger Abbey";—and that is high praise. In the uniform of an Austrian colonel she presented a trim and jaunty figure.

When "L'Aiglon" was first acted in Paris, with Sarah Bernhardt as *Reichstadt*, its references to the former military achievements of France,—all achievements of the cut-throat order being considered "glories,"—caused a prodigious emotion to surge in the Gallic bosom, and the result of that noble excitement was a general osculation. Sardou kissed Rostand; Coquelin kissed Bernhardt, and there was a miscellaneous exchange of kisses among princes, potentates, politicians, and martial chieftains, such as might have satisfied old *Falstaff's* adjuration to "let it rain kissing comfits and snow eringoes!" No such result was produced when the play

was acted in New York. Suggestions of the sanguinary career of that vulgar, unscrupulous, wicked, and hateful, though indomitable, brilliant, and consummately able military tyrant Napoleon Bonaparte were received with composure, and the melancholy fact that the son did not succeed in imitating the sire was accepted with resignation. To enjoy the drama of "The Eaglet" the spectator must be one of those ingenuous and confiding readers of history who, uninstructed by copious modern revelations of the truth, still cling to the belief that Napoleon Bonaparte was a hero, that his character was splendid, his life glorious, his exile lamentable, his death pathetic, and his fate a cruelty, forever to be deplored. Credulous souls of that persuasion still abound, and "The Eaglet" ought to be a comfort to them—even when it is presented by an actress unequal to the leading part. More exigent observers,—feeling that sentimental regret for the Napoleonic dynasty is something for which no friend of human liberty and civilization has any ground, or could find any reason,—cannot be much affected by it. The public gain in the presentment of "The Eaglet" was knowledge of a French drama of considerable pictorial merit and technical ingenuity and of much publicity and vogue; an impulse to the reviewal of salient passages in French history and to the closer observance of French politics; reminders of a fatuous but not wholly uninteresting historic personage; and, finally, such enjoyment as could be derived

from gazing on luminous scenic tableaux and seeing several fine achievements in the art of acting. John H. Gilmour, impersonating one of those sturdy soldiers of the Empire that were prevalent and delightful on the stage in the distant days of Henry Placide and John Nickinson, touched the heart by his natural, simple, powerful expression of blunt honesty, gruff humor, and dauntless fidelity. The tribute to the Old Guard was spoken by that fine actor in a strain of passionate eloquence, and his depiction of the death of *Flambeau*,—self-inflicted by the veteran, to avoid capture,—was essentially the climax of the representation.

“QUALITY STREET.”

On November 11, 1901, Barrie's play of “Quality Street” was, after various preliminary performances in other cities, produced at the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, Miss Adams acting the principal part in it, *Phæbe Throssell*. In that play Mr. Barrie has told a pretty love story in a happy vein of simplicity, refinement, tenderness, and truth, and Miss Adams was provided with a sweet and gentle character, harmonious with her temperament and level with her talents,—a part making no exaction that she did not prove entirely able to satisfy. The amiable, engaging character of *Phæbe Throssell* is pictured against a background of humble domestic life, in an old English town,—such a town as Warwick, or Salisbury, or Devizes must have

been, in the days of the Regency,—and, in the development of the story, an expert stratagem, which, while not intrinsically novel, is deeply effective, was artistically employed. The domestic life portrayed is that of two sisters, *Phæbe* and *Susan Throssell*, who dwell in “Quality Street,”—demure, staid, highly sensitive damsels of the Jane Austen order,—decorous in manner, studiously observant of convention, prone to conceal deep feeling beneath the guise of formality. *Phæbe* secretly loves a young military officer, and the stratagem consists in her assumption of a disguise under which she attracts many admirers, among them the gallant soldier, just returned from the Napoleonic wars, of whom she is enamoured, and by whom she is beloved. The disguise is the sudden resumption,—under an impulse partly of pique and partly of profound joy,—of a gay, sparkling, piquant personality, now soft and demure, now careless and impetuous, and thus altogether potent with the enchanting blandishments of youth and beauty. *Phæbe*, sorrowful in the absence of her hero, has become decorous and staid: his return and his somewhat obtuse raillery arouse her from the dulness of frowsy decorum, and she presently appears, at a military ball, in the character, and under the name, of an invented relative,—her coquettish niece,—and so, while bewildering and mortifying her suitor, she leads him to speak his mind, and discovers that she has long possessed his love.

The effect of the play depends on the startling con-

trast between *Phæbe* in the guise of dashing, brilliant, engaging womanhood, and *Phæbe* in her customary condition of concealed ardor and outward drab placidity of demeanor. Miss Adams in that character,—revealed once more as her seemingly ingenuous self, no longer burdened by the weight of emotions which her nature could not feel nor her art express,—made that contrast vivid, emphatic, and sympathetic. Whether as the patient, mild, rueful, but brave little school-teacher or the buoyant, gay, coquettish ball-room beauty,—sometimes demure, sometimes mischievous, now pensive and now tantalizing, now impulsive with pouting resentment, now sweetly wayward and pert, and now reckless and arch in the perversity of a rebellious heart,—she presented an image that was full of allurements and that completely filled the dramatist's apparent ideal of his heroine. By a *Fanchette*-like burst of resentment and revolt against the injustice of fate and the tyranny of inexorable circumstance Miss Adams,—with hysterical vehemence and rapid vociferation,—rose as near to genuine passion as her nature would allow her to rise. Some execrable verse, by Mr. Barrie, in the programme, directed attention to roses in the pathway of his heroine, which were said to be “her fancies walking round,” and stated that she was “gowned” in “sweet-smelling lavender.” Miss Adams, however, clothed herself in more conventional raiment and presented a quaint and pretty

picture. Coming in a period when many stage heroines were in poignant distress, Miss Adams' presentation of *Phæbe Throssell* was a public benefaction, for it was a relief and a delight to see somebody around whom the sunshine seemed to play and the roses bloom.

"THE PRETTY SISTER OF JOSÉ."

On November 10, 1903, Miss Adams appeared at the Empire Theatre, New York, in a dreary fabric of dialogue by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, called "The Pretty Sister of José." The sister is a Spanish girl named *Pepita*. *Pepita's* beauty, revealed on an occasion of that gentle amusement miscalled a bull-fight, captivates a matador named *Sabastiano*—distracting his attention from an oppugnant bull and thus precipitating disaster. The matador is wounded by the bull, and in his consequent illness he is tended by *Pepita*, and, after some vicissitudes, he wins her for his wife. The bull does not appear: the vicissitudes constitute the play. The interest of the story is developed very slowly. At the outset it is indicated that *Pepita*, a girl from the country, just arrived in Madrid, to dwell with her affectionate brother, has unhappy memories. She remembers that her mother was abused by her father, though fondly devoted to him, and she therefore harbors a resentment against men. She will enjoy existence and no man shall win her love. Hearing the praises of the famous

matador, and becoming acquainted with a girl who loves him and is dying because unloved by him in return, she becomes especially infuriated against the all-fascinating champion, and when at length he becomes her wooer she repels him even while luring him by her coquetry. The pique seems to be destitute of adequate motive, and it is pushed much beyond the limit of reason. The dialogue is dense with verbiage—literary, not characteristic of the several speakers, and, therefore, not dramatic. Almost every speaker in the play employs one of the most noxious of all the lazy expedients of literary weakness. “When *one* loves then *one* suffers.” “When *one* opens his eyes then *one* sees”; “When *one* thinks then *one* has a headache”:—and, it may be added, When *one* listens to chatter like that, then *one* wishes that a dramatist had revised the text. Even the lover, in the torrent of his declaration, had something to say about the feeling inspired “when *one* meets with a girl that *one* does not understand.” Mrs. Burnett writes books and all her persons talk as if they also were aspirants for the distinction of three volumes in Mudie’s Library. The piece “comes to Hecuba” in time, but there is a weary waste of words in getting there. *Pepita* might be described as an elaboration of Shakespeare’s *Phæbe*, in “As You Like It.” Put into Spanish raiment and framed with a love-story, that is the essential character. The intention, apparently, was to indicate fluctuations of thought and feeling in the

mind and heart of a romantic, wilful young girl, when agitated by the soft approaches of the grand passion. *Pepita*, as impersonated by Miss Adams, was a tenuous damsel, of peevish aspect, who closed her teeth and spoke through them, producing, at times, a strange, nasal sound, as of a sheep bleating. She was also, however, a girl of delicate, winning sensibility, impulsive, wayward, variable, sometimes piquant and perverse, sometimes gentle and sincere, and she looked well in Spanish colors; so that the infatuation of the matador was justified. Miss Adams denoted exceedingly well the struggle in the girl's heart to maintain a haughty demeanor while longing to yield to the impulse of love. She likewise danced and sang. And from the moment of her first speech, "Oh, what joy to be here!" down to her rapture of surrender, she held the sympathy of her audience.

"PETER PAN."

Barrie's fairy play called "Peter Pan" is an amiable fabric of whim and fancy, devised, apparently, for the amusement of children. No higher purpose than that is discernible in it. No other writers have handled fairies or fairy fancies as Pope handled them, in "The Rape of the Lock," or as Southey handled them, in the beautiful, much undervalued poem of "The Curse of Kehama." Barrie, however, handled them well enough for his apparent purpose in "Peter Pan." The play is flexible in construction, fluent in style, abundant

in ridiculous incident, and diverting,—much as a nimble kitten is when sporting with a ball of yarn.

“By sports like these are all their cares beguiled;
The sports of children satisfy the child.”

The fantasy sometimes runs into puerility and becomes tedious. The fabric is immeasurably inferior, in fancy and satire, to Lewis Carroll's “Alice in Wonderland.” The wide currency it obtained had the effect of blotching the newspapers, all over the country, with expressions of sickly sentimentality and rhapsodical blather about “kiddies,” “grown-ups,” “phantasies,” etc. “Peter Pan” was, however, well enough in its way, and Miss Adams, as *Peter*, gave a tolerable performance, in a vein of grotesquerie, pleasantry, impulse, and vim, remotely kindred with her performance of *Babbie*, but much inferior to that impersonation. It is a significant fact, as indicating the true place and influence of Maude Adams in the theatrical movement of her time, that *Peter Pan* was the most popular of her achievements, and that *Maggie Wylie* was the high-water mark of her dramatic accomplishment.

“THE JESTERS.”

In the play of “The Jesters,”—adapted by John Raphael from a French play, by Miguel Zamaçois, called “Les Bouffons”—which was brought out in New York on January 15, 1908, Miss Adams found another

part which, to some extent, suited her personality and enabled her to exercise her special charm. That piece is a delicate fabric of romantic fancy, the display of an episode of youth and love, in the somewhat grim environment of a mediæval castle. The Wizard of the North might have told such a story. The fine old novelist G. P. R. James would have revelled in it. All the adjuncts of the old-time romance are present or are suggested,—the frowning bastion, the donjon-keep, the feudal lord, with more rank than wealth; the bewitching daughter of the house; the seneschal; the bragging trooper; and then the lover, coming in his homely disguise, to discomfit all competitors and triumphantly bear away the beauteous damsel. In substance the play is simplicity itself: the treatment, investing that simplicity with importance, commends it equally to the imagination and the heart.

This is the story: *Solange*, the daughter, aged 17, of the *Baron de Mautpré*, pretends to be depressed and ill, for lack of congenial companionship and want of occupation suitable to her age. Through the counsel and connivance of *Oliver*, a trusted friend and servitor of *de Mautpré*, two youths, *René de Chancenac* and *Robert de Belfonte*, assume, respectively, the names of *Chicot* and *Narcisse*, and come to the castle of *de Mautpré*, as jesters. Both are attracted by the youth and beauty of *Solange*. Both endeavor to win her affections. The one, *Narcisse*, is self-assertive and grandil-

loquent: the other, *Chicot*, who pretends to be a hunchback, is modest and gentle. Those two competitors are shown in a sequence of verbal conflicts in the endeavor to win the love of *Solange*. At last *Chicot*, whom the girl believes to be poor and lowly and whom she sees to be deformed, wins her preference, because of the beauty, nobility, and loveliness of his mind and soul. Then his disguise is penetrated; he is discovered to be straight and handsome as well as noble, and a happy future is indicated for *Solange* and her chosen mate. The story is, in effect, a fairy tale.

The fact that Miss Adams has chosen to appear, on many occasions, in male semblance has always been deplorable, but in this fabric of fancy it was not of much importance. The authentic attraction of the actress consists in the attribute of piquant, sprightly womanhood. Her performance in "The Jesters" revealed that she had gained in authority by reason of experience and years, but otherwise that there was little change from the day of her signal success as *Babbie*. Her method of acting has the virtue of simplicity, and also it presents the radical defect of obviousness: it shows the wheels. She does the same things over and over and over again,—not only the same things that she has done in other plays, but in every play the same thing that she has done a few minutes before. Her gestures are often constricted and spasmodic, and she injures her vocalism by the habit of speaking with her lips pursed and her

teeth almost closed, so that, as *Lady Teazle* says, her words "seem to slide out edgewise, as if from the aperture of a poor's-box": but of the esteem in which Miss Adams has long been held by a numerous public of playgoers there can be no doubt.

"WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS."

Barrie's comedy of "What Every Woman Knows" had its first representation in America at the Empire Theatre, New York, on December 23, 1908, and Miss Adams gave a proficient, serio-comic, sometimes pathetic performance, representing, in a distinctly American manner, the peculiar and interesting Scotch girl who is the heroine of that ingenious composition. The piece showed itself to be somewhat more a play and somewhat less a "fantasy" than most of Barrie's later productions. The dramatist told a story by means of action,—the action being interpretative of the dialogue,—and, in telling the story, evolved character, sometimes much exaggerated for comic effect, and thus touched alike the springs of laughter and of tears. The fact which every woman knows is the fact that man, in the order of nature, is largely dependent on woman, and that without her assistance he would accomplish little if anything,—that he must be "mothered" and encouraged. That truth is illustrated and enforced by a fanciful, humorous, extravagant, and good-naturedly satirical exposition of Scotch persons and Scotch domestic life.

Barrie's method of stating his self-evident proposition is quizzical; the quizzical attitude of observation seems to have become the fixed, inveterate habit of his mind. The formula is blithely stated by the heroine: "Woman was not made out of Adam's rib, but out of his funny bone." That heroine, *Maggie Wylie* (the name itself possesses a latent significance), was a plain girl, the sister of three thrifty Scotchmen, *Aleck*, *David*, and *James Wylie*,—all resident in a Scotch town. The *Wylies* were possessed of a library. There was a railway porter, named *John Shand*, who had "a soul above buttons" and who wished to improve his mind by reading. With that purpose in view he surreptitiously entered the house of the *Wylies*, on various occasions, in order to obtain access to their books. At last he was captured as a burglar, but on being apprised of the motive of his singular conduct his captors agreed to pardon his burglarious incursion and to provide for his education, if he would agree to become,—after an interval of several years, and in the event of her concurrence,—the husband of *Maggie Wylie*. To that condition *Shand* assented, and in due time,—*Maggie* coming to know him and to love him, while releasing him from his promise,—the marriage occurred, and thereafter *Shand*, continually guided and aided by his wise, sweet, sensible wife,—without any knowledge, on his part, of her influence,—was embarked on the flood-tide of a prosperous public career. Then, as sometimes happens with clever

men, his head was turned by flattery, his vanity got the better of his judgment, and he became infatuated with a sparkling, worldly woman, by name *Lady Sybil Lazenby*. His wife, *Maggie*, in the natural course of things, perceived her husband's weakness and folly, and was mortified and grieved. She followed, however, an unusual and unnatural course,—providing that *Shand* should be thrown into the society of his shallow charmer, in the comparative seclusion of a country cottage; where, presently, common sense surpervening on irrational sentiment, the lover and the lady found themselves mutually bored, so that *Shand* was glad to return to his *Maggie* and humbly to recognize and avouch the infinite obligation that rests on any man who is so fortunate as to possess the love of a good woman. There are many details in the play, all deftly, if a little wildly, devised, and all concentrated to bear on the illustration of that central truth. The spirit is pure, the touch is light, the satire is playful, the colloquy is neat and fluent; the characterization, if sometimes violent, is distinct; the sequence of situations is cumulative,—notwithstanding that the First Act, with its audacity of fancy, is more brilliantly contrived and more humorously written than either of the three others,—and the method of impartment of meaning is, rightly, that of suggestion, not that of didacticism.

The dramatists who have done the greatest and most enduring service to the drama in the present period

are William S. Gilbert, Henry Arthur Jones, and Augustus Thomas, all of whom have evinced, besides other faculties, passion and power. Barrie has enriched dramatic literature with delicious creations of whimsical fancy and gentle humor, which could not be too much commended, and for which he merits the gratitude of every lover of the Stage. Miss Adams entered thoroughly into the spirit of the part of *Maggie Wylie*,—the spirit which combines goodness, tenderness, magnanimity, pride, motherhood, and pity with some little dash of tartness,—and gave a performance which needed only flexibility and more essential Scotch character to make it as entirely enjoyable as it was artistically consistent. At the moment when *Maggie* destroys *Shand's* written promise of marriage and again at the moment when she gazes on the beauty who has bewitched her husband, Miss Adams attained to the loftiest height she has reached, in the expression of feeling. The only essentially Scotch performance was that of *David Wylie* by Mr. David Torrence—correct and admirable in every particular. The part of *Shand* is technically so good (though no man could ever be quite so insensate under the circumstances shown) that it would carry any actor, and it carried Mr. Richard Bennett. He was not in the least a Scotchman, but he gave a consistent, sustained, effective performance.

VII.

BLANCHE BATES.

1872—19—.

EXPERIENCE has taught, as one of the laws of Moral Nature, that from persons to whom much has been given of intellectual faculty and alluring potency much will be expected. The richly endowed mind that trifles with its opulence, neglecting to fulfil itself and perform its duty, will eventually incur the retribution of disenchantment, unavailing sorrow, and immedicable regret. The penalty is not imposed from without: it does not proceed from the opinion of other persons,—a minor influence, and in the moral discipline of the soul completely insignificant: it comes from within. In the conduct of life, accordingly, those persons are wise who aim high, and who, at any sacrifice of personal comfort and at implacable repudiation of base expediency, cleave to the finest ideals that they are able to form. That thought is irresistibly brought to mind by consideration of the professional procedure of that exceptional and remarkable actress Blanche Bates, a woman to whom Nature has been prodigal of some of her richest gifts.

Miss Bates was born in Portland, Oregon, on August

25, 1872. Her father, F. M. Bates, and her mother were actors of respectable talent, trained in the old school. Her father was manager of the Oro Fino Theatre, in Portland, at the time of her birth. She was removed to San Francisco in early childhood, and there she received a good education. Her parents did not destine her for the Stage. In 1890 she was married to Lieutenant Milton F. Davis, U. S. A., but the marriage proving unhappy the husband and wife soon parted. She made her first theatrical appearance at Stockwell's Theatre (afterward the Columbia), San Francisco, in 1894, acting in "This Picture and That," on the occasion of a benefit performance for L. R. Stockwell. Soon afterward she obtained employment to play minor parts in a stock company managed by Mr. T. Daniel Frawley. Later she joined the company of Messrs. Giffin and Neill, playing in Denver and other Western cities. That company was bought by Mr. Frawley, and under his management Miss Bates made her first decided hit, as *Mrs. Hillary*, in D. D. Lloyd's play of "The Senator," in 1895. She then acted in the West for about three years, in a variety of parts, many of her performances being given in association with that fine actor the late Frank Worthing, whose counsel and assistance did much to develop, train, and refine her exceptional dramatic aptitude. In a whole-hearted tribute to that actor, soon after his lamented death, Miss Bates, with a frank generosity as



From a Photograph.

In the Collection of the Author.

BLANCHE BATES.

admirable as it is rare among artists of any class, wrote:

"It is not only as for many years a professional associate, comrade, and friend that I seek for words to recognize the Art of Frank Worthing. It is as the grateful disciple to whom, out of the wealth of his own exquisite artistic knowledge, he so freely gave instruction,—and gave it so kindly and gently as to make its acceptance seem to be almost a favor to him. His knowledge of his art was wonderful; it was founded on the inborn instinct for acting, and increased by the close association in the formative years with those past masters, Irving and Wyndham.

"Great as were the love and admiration and understanding given to Frank Worthing by the theatregoers of America and England,—and to that greatness in America I can testify from personal observation, for I acted with him in every State of the Union and in far away Hawaii—entire recognition and appreciation of his worth as a technician has never, in my opinion, been accorded to him. We've 'enjoyed his work'; an enviable business position had been his for years; the audience, the great paying audience on which the existence of the theatre depends, recognized and admired and applauded the results of his work. But his true value as a *teacher*,—as a leader in his profession,—has never been brought home to any but those who have worked with him, whose art is founded on his. And it is with loving gratitude that I write myself down the makings of his hands. What little skill I may have in my chosen work, whatever knowledge of the expression of shades of meaning, of time, of movement, of 'color,' are owing to my eight years of close association, of study, and of work with him, and to the fifteen years of his sympathetic understanding and affectionate encouragement.

"Frank Worthing was one of the foremost light comedians of his time; yet exquisite as his work was in such comedy, his

wonderful knowledge and art were shown with equal skill in his able differentiation between any two straight *leading parts*,—so that each stood out as a distinct character, although cast by the playwright in the same conventional mould. The man who could make equally convincing and artistic *Charles Surface* and *Ira Beasley*, in Bret Harte's 'Sue,' or the dissipated stock gambler and embezzler of 'The Climbers,' and the nervous man in 'All the Comforts of Home,' was possessed of the art and the instinct for delineation in a degree given to few.

"There is one phase of Frank Worthing's ability not generally known: he could write clearly, easily, dramatically. With the prodigality of youth, this gift was poured out in anonymous one-act plays for benefits; for the struggling vaudevillian; for 'practice'—practice of which he threw away the fruits, for, although he wrote at least one successful play, I think he kept no manuscripts or records of them.

"About the personality of the man, the frankness of the comrade, the loyalty of the friend, I dare not trust myself to write. That is a memory treasured in the hearts of those who loved him—and through the tears of honest affection, admiration, loyalty, and regret, I am proud to subscribe myself gratefully his, in remembrance."

In the spring of 1898 Miss Bates obtained an engagement in the dramatic company of Augustin Daly, and she soon revealed herself as an actress of superior, varied, and auspicious powers, exceptional professional resource, and rare personal charm. During the summer and fall of 1898 she acted in stock companies in Chicago and the West. She then returned to Daly's company, in New York, but did not long remain there. On February 9, 1899, she acted the *Countess Mirtza*, in "The Great

Ruby," and made a decisive success. She proved a disturbing element in Daly's company, because strongly individual and formidable in character, brilliant in beauty, and piquantly original in style. After leaving that company, although she immediately obtained an engagement to act *Milady*, with James O'Neill, in "The Three Guardsmen," she experienced some vicissitudes of fortune, but though she was sometimes obliged to revert to the stock she did not lapse into obscurity. She was, however, for some time constrained to wear the fetter, but she made her way by her strength, and the hour came when, by a distinct popular success, she effected her liberation. It is the nature of a strong character, whatever may be the confronting obstacles, steadfastly to pursue its inherently propulsive purpose. Her character was strong and aspirant, it had not been saddened, and by the compelling enticement of it, and by her ability, persistence, and achievement, she was soon in a position to command. The notable parts in which she has conspicuously appeared, in various professional associations, after *Countess Mirtza* and *Milady*, are *Hannah Jacobs*, in "The Children of the Ghetto"; *Cora*, in "Naughty Anthony"; *Cho-Cho-San*, in "Madame Butterfly"; *Cigarette*, in "Under Two Flags"; *Yo-San*, in "The Darling of the Gods" (her most symmetrical performance); *The Girl*, in "The Girl of the Golden West," and *Anna Granger*, in "Fighting Hope." Neither of them, nor all of them combined, could wholly

arouse the nature which, at moments, she indicated in her acting of them, or could completely liberate all the feeling and governing control of feeling which, at those moments, she suggested as within her capability; and it is little less than wonderful that, with such material, she was able to accomplish so much.

Blanche Bates might be a great actress, either in Comedy or Tragedy, or both: potentially, by reason of what she is, and of the simplicity, truth, and finish of her artistic method, she *is* a great actress. There is no woman visible on the American Stage to-day who rivals her in combined brilliancy and power. She could act Shakespeare's *Beatrice*, and she could, with study, act his *Cleopatra*. She possesses the temperament, the person, and the kindred expressive faculties for all such characters as are typified by *Zenobia*, *Hypatia*, *Semiramis*, *Queen Katharine*, and *Mary Stuart*. Her range of expression would admit of her successful acting in *Margaret of Navarre*, at one extreme, and *Lady Jane Grey*, at the other. All those parts are mentioned not as parts necessarily desirable to be shown, but as representative, indicative types. No one wishes to induct Miss Bates, or any other performer, into a classical dramatic cemetery. The point is that, at a time when the Stage stands in urgent need of intellectual control, that actress, greatly gifted and graciously endowed, had attained a position of leadership, and, in a moment,—whether from caprice, or weariness,

or feminine amiability, or acquisitiveness, or bad judgment, or cynical compliance with the vacuous social taste and sordid commercial spirit of the day,—tossed it aside, as if it were a withered flower. It would be foolish to deny to Blanche Bates the attribute of intellectual character, but the conclusion is inevitable, when contemplating the course she has chosen to take, that her professional ambition has not been directed by intellectual purpose, or rather that she has weakly permitted her purpose to be thwarted. Ample material gain has rewarded her exertions, but her material success has involved a considerable sacrifice. She is an actress who might have rivalled the achievement and renown of either Mary Anderson or Ada Rehan, and she might have done so with monetary gain—popularly considered the true and only certificate of success. During the two years 1910 to 1912 Miss Bates has devoted her fine talents to a farce called “Nobody’s Widow,” one of the silliest conglomerations of twaddle and indelicacy with which the trash-ridden Stage of America has been encumbered,—presenting in that employment a radiant image of female loveliness and a melancholy spectacle of talent perverted and opportunity thrown away.

The central idea of that farce (the work of Mr. Avery Hopwood) is denial of an established relationship under circumstances which might cause absurd perplexities and ridiculous consequences,—such, in general character, as ensue when *Charles Courtly*, in “London Assurance,”

on being introduced to his father, *Sir Harcourt*, blandly greets him as a new acquaintance. The chief female character, *Roxana*, acted by Miss Bates, has, in Europe, met and married a "*Mr. Clayton*," who, actually, is an English nobleman, the *Duke of Moreland*; but having, on their wedding-day, found him in the embrace of a mistress, *Roxana* has repudiated and left him,—privately instituting proceedings for divorce, and presently apprising her friends in America that her husband, of whom they have heard, but only by his assumed name of *Clayton*, is dead, and that she, accordingly, is a widow. Later she visits one of those friends, at Palm Beach, Florida, and there she is, by chance, confronted by her husband, then a visitor to the same hostess, but bearing his right name. *Roxana's* husband endeavors to reinstate himself in her affections, but, persistently and with alternate pleasantry and sarcasm, he is treated by her as an accidental acquaintance. *Roxana* assures him that, as "*Mr. Clayton*," he is "dead"; that she has never before seen him; that, to her, he is, as the *Duke of Moreland*, nobody; that she is a widow. That attitude she maintains until apprised of her divorce, when she becomes conscious of a sudden access of tenderness for him; and, eventually,—though not until after various trips and stumbles on the track of reconciliation,—she first allows herself to be again married to him, and then allows herself to be convinced of his honest intentions and the sincerity of his love.

That is the general outline of the piece, and, momentarily, it seems the harbinger of genuine if preposterous fun. An expert dramatist, adhering to one medium of expression, would, and easily could, have worked out the process of reconciliation between the wife and husband through a series of, at least at the moment, seemingly rational and certainly comical complexities, and thus made a good and inoffensive farce. The fabricator of "Nobody's Widow," while making an auspicious start and supplying a few passages of colloquy which now and then show a glint of wit, piled silliness of situation, clumsiness of construction, paltriness of incident and "business," and steadily accumulative coarseness, verbal or suggested, upon flimsiness of character and insignificance of plot, till his structure of crude nonsense became a veritable monument of inanity and indelicacy.

A farce is well enough, in its way and in its place, and a good farce well acted gives pleasure and merits praise. But such an actress as Blanche Bates, in the prime of life, in the plenitude of her powers, and after a conspicuous career of thirteen years, largely on the metropolitan stage, should not be acting in farce, —and in wretchedly bad farce. Such a manager as David Belasco,—to whom the public has a right to look for enterprise worthy of his high artistic reputation and vast influence,—should not place a paltry fabric upon the stage with a care and lavish expenditure suit-

able to the finest of drama. It does not signify that the acting of Miss Bates in that contemptible piece was good. How could her acting, in a perfectly easy farce part, be otherwise than good—she being what she is, and possessing the experience that she possesses? She had only to be gay and free in demeanor; to be cool, quick, tantalizing, and once or twice insolent and vehement; to meet palpable subterfuge with demure cajolery, and repel brazen impudence with nonchalant scorn; and—which is not a pleasing memory—to reveal, in the closing passage, which was insidiously devised for an impartment of voluptuous suggestion, those emotions, eminently natural and in themselves innocent and right, which modest, self-respecting womanhood, with decent reticence, naturally shields beneath impenetrable reserve and privacy. An actress who could readily impersonate such a part as *Violante*, in “The Wonder,” and express in it all the spirit of coquetry of which her nature is capable, could not fail to be much more than equal to the puny requirements of such a part as *Roxana*. To record the lapse of Blanche Bates into such stuff as “Nobody’s Widow” is only to record wasted opportunity and disappointed expectation.

The earlier performances of this fine actress, representative of her true nature and her admirable artistic achievement, should be commemorated—for they are well remembered and they will not soon be forgotten.

"UNDER TWO FLAGS."

A drama based on Ouida's well-known novel, "Under Two Flags,"—being one of several that have been deduced from the same source,—was presented at the Garden Theatre on February 5, 1901, under the supervision of David Belasco, and Miss Bates acted the heroine of it, *Cigarette*. The story of that ardent, picturesque, adventurous girl is a story of amatory infatuation, brave exploits, and pathetic self-sacrifice, under romantic circumstances. The representative of *Cigarette* must be handsome, passionate, expeditious, magnanimous, resolute, full of resource, sparkling with energy, potent in fiery conflicts of feeling, and, above all, capable of covering grief with a smile. That is the essence of the character. Blanche Bates, possessing rare personal distinction and a temperament equally attuned to the extreme moods of mirth and grief, was easily proficient in the assumption of that personality and in the pictorial and effective expression of it. Without the presence of that actress the play would have passed as a populous, tumultuous stage pageant—a spectacle of Moorish scenery and military bustle: animated by her power, sensibility, and spirited, various, and incessant action, it was lifted to dramatic importance.

The employment of *Cigarette* is the salvation from various dangers of a man whom she loves and whose love is bestowed on another woman, and her diligence

in that employment is attended by risk and rewarded by ruin. Many persons appear to think that it is beatific to be loved by other persons and grievous not to be loved, and, accordingly, love-tales exemplary of the joy, on the one hand, and the sorrow, on the other, that are sequent from those antipodal conditions of experience are perennially popular. *Pygmalion* worships a stone; *Titania* caresses the ears of an ass, and the populace is thrilled. *Cigarette's* passion for *Bertie Cecil* is of the old, familiar kind, and, the scene being Algeria, her adventures are, theatrically, shown across a background of singular beauty,—for that country is remarkable for flowers, cedar forests, Oriental palms, Roman remains, stony deserts contrasted with smiling villages, and luxuriant gardens not distant from mountains covered with snow.

Taste, thought, ingenuity, and sedulous care were expended on the pageant by Belasco, and the result was a magnificent spectacle,—one of the richest and most impressive ever seen on our Stage. Had it been brought here by Henry Irving or Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, it would have been hailed as a transcendent exploit in stage craft. Every scene was a picture, every picture was harmonious with the phase of the story to be illustrated, and in the transitions from the luxurious villa, with its prospect of the tranquil ocean faintly rippling beneath the moon, to the desolate, rocky, weird, and ominous mountain gorge a climax of solemn

grandeur seemed to take shape, color, and charm, slowly rising out of a dream of romantic beauty. The drift of whirling mist over the darkening waves of sand on the bleak seacoast would have seemed the most consummate of illusions, had it not been excelled by the blinding terrors of a mountain tempest. Those effects were wrought by simple means, but they were not less splendid because of the simplicity of their management.

The dramatic victory was not won, however, by either the pageantry or the play. "Under Two Flags" is hackneyed in expedients, abrupt in movement, drastic in method, coarse in character, shady in morals, florid in style, and the version of it used by Belasco was made silly, in some of the colloquies, by the infusion of contemporary slang and reference. The listener heard of "rot" and also of "the Klondike,"—unknown in the period of the story. But the old novel had been made to yield telling situations, and the strong and splendid acting of Miss Bates vitalized them and brilliantly animated the whole structure. The revelation of jealousy, working in an unsophisticated, half-savage nature, the elemental passion expressed in the fantastic dance, the prayer of the breaking heart for her lover's fidelity, the supplication for his pardon, the agony when repulsed, the ecstasy when triumphant, the tremendous conflict of emotions in the wild ride for rescue—they were all displayed with more of human nature and more of a competent artist's power to control feelings

and to shape the effect of situation than had been seen on our Stage for many a long day.

“THE DARLING OF THE GODS.”

The drama called “The Darling of the Gods,” by David Belasco and John Luther Long, was presented in New York for the first time on December 3, 1902, and since then it has been acted many times, in many places,—always to the satisfaction of the community, always with success. It is an excellent play, a unique fabric of fancy, wildly romantic, rich and strange with unusual characters, lively with incident, occasionally mystical with implication of Japanese beliefs and customs, opulent with an Oriental splendor of atmosphere and detail,—like that of Beckford’s romance of “Vathek,”—fragrant with sweetness,—like Moore’s “Lalla Rookh,”—busy with action, effective by reason of situation, and communicative of a love story of enchaining interest and melancholy beauty.

The story of *Yo-San*, who is designated “the darling of the gods,” separated from all adjuncts and accessories, is simple. She is a princess in Japan, betrothed to a Japanese courtier whom she does not wish to wed. She has stipulated, as a preliminary condition of their marriage, that the courtier must prove his valor by capturing a certain formidable outlaw, *Prince Kara*, who, on being captured, will be put to death. She has been saved from fatal dishonor through the expe-

ditious courage and promptitude of that outlaw (unrecognized by her as such), and on seeing each other they become lovers. She conceals him in her dwelling, when, wounded and almost dying, he has made his way through a cordon of enemies, and for many days she tends him, till his wounds are healed, and then, for a time, those lovers are happy, in their secret love. She is, however, compromised by this indiscretion, and when presently her father, *Prince Saigon*, discovers her secret,—and, as he thinks, her dishonor,—she is declared an outcast, and her lover is doomed to torture and death. She then learns that she can insure that lover's pardon and liberation by betraying the hiding-place of his outlaw followers, and, in desperate agony, she betrays them: but she gains nothing by that action except an access of misery. *Prince Kara*, having, with a few of his outlawed followers, fought his way through the lines of his enemies, and discovered that the secret of the hiding-place, confided by him to *Yo-San*, has been by her revealed, commits suicide, in the honorable Japanese manner, and she is left alone, with only his forgiveness as a comfort, and with the hope that,—after a thousand years of loneliness and grief, in the underworld of shadows,—she will be again united with him in the eternal happiness of heaven. The play shows *Yo-San* as an innocent, confiding, pathetic figure, amid stormy vicissitudes and afflicting trials, and leaves her, at the last, redeemed and transfigured, on the verge of Para-

dise, where *Kara* stretches out his arms to embrace her, and where there is neither trouble, nor parting, nor sorrow any more.

The experience of the Japanese girl is the old ordeal, over again, of woman's sacrifice and anguish, when giving all for love. Something of Shakespeare's *Juliet* is in that heroine, something of Goethe's *Margaret*, something of the many passionate, wayward, mournfully beautiful ideals of woman's sacrifice that are immortal in story and song. She is a loving and sorrowing woman, true, tender, faithful forever, and celestial alike in her love and her grief. The character of *Yo-San* combines some of the finest components of womanhood and exemplifies virtues such as, indeed, redeem the frailty of human nature—purity of heart and life, true love, endurance, heroism of conduct, and devoted integrity of spiritual faith. Blanche Bates gained the greatest success of her professional career by her impersonation of *Yo-San*. She was an entirely lovely image of ardent, innocent, ingenuous, noble womanhood—such an image as irresistibly allured by the charm of blended physical and spiritual beauty, bewitched by piquant simplicity, thrilled the imagination by an impartment of passionate vitality, and by its exemplification of eternal constancy in love,—the immortal fidelity of the spirit,—captured the heart. Her facility of action and fluency of expression were continuously spontaneous, and she was delightful both

to see and to hear. Such an achievement in the dramatic art vindicates the beneficent utility of the Theatre, because it cheers and ennobles, and thus practically helps society, through the ministration of beauty. This is a hard world. Almost everybody in it struggles beneath burdens of care and sorrow. Multitudes of human beings dwell in trouble and suffering. An imperative need of our race is the strength of patience and the light of hope. Dramatic art, or any art, which satisfies that need, or even remotely helps to satisfy it, is a blessing. The rest is little, if at all, better than a curse.

The acting of Blanche Bates, which, from the first of her performances on the New York Stage, had shown a charming wildness and freedom, was, in *Yo-San*, more unconventional than ever. Her appearance was beautiful, her action graceful, alert, vigorous, and free from all restraint of self-consciousness and finical prudery. There was no ostentation in it, no parade, no assumption of the moral crank,—such as, at one time, there had been reason to apprehend through her temporary association with some of the crank-dramas,—no pulpiteer impartment of stuffy didacticism. She came in a dreary time of “problems,” “sermons,” “arguments,” “symbols,” and the flatulent nonsense of scissorized novels and dirty farce, and she came as a relief and a blessing—the authentic representative of youth, health, strength, love, and hope.

There is one moment in “The Darling of the Gods”

when suspense is wrought to a point of intense tension, and when the inherent, essential faculty of the actor, the power to reveal almost in a flash the feeling of the heart and the working of the mind, is imperatively required. *Kara*, wounded, exhausted, desperate, has sought refuge in the dwelling of the *Princess Yo-San* and, by her, has been succored and concealed. *Migaku*, the *Shadow*, a spy of the terrible *War Minister*, *Zakuri*, has traced him to that refuge, but a devoted guardian of *Yo-San*, *Inu*, a Corean giant, has detected the presence of the spy, has seized and slain him, and has hidden the dead body in a stream. *Zakuri* and the father of *Yo-San* follow the spy, and come to the dwelling of *Yo-San*. *Zaruki* wishes that it be searched, but he agrees to accept her oath, if she will give it, that she knows nothing of the whereabouts of *Kara*. The *Princess* is summoned and, denying the presence of *Kara*, is required, by her father, to swear that she has spoken the truth. Words can faintly indicate the beauty of the picture and action which follow, as the girl seeks to protect her lover. The time is night. The scene is a strange, fantastic, fairy-like garden, of old Japan, a bower of flowers, with twining wistaria wreathing the trees and house, and far, far off, visible in the silver moonlight, a great snow-capped volcano, the peak of which is touched with ruddy light. The father and the dreaded *Minister of War* stand before the door. Miss Bates, as *Yo-San*, stood a little above them, dressed



From a Photograph by Byron, N. Y.

In the Collection of the Author.

BLANCHE BATES

as

The Princess Yo-San, in "The Darling of the Gods."

in soft, flowing white garments, open at the throat, her black hair loose about her face and shoulders, her beautiful dark eyes suffused with a fascinating expression of innocence, tranquillity, and tenderness. Without a moment of hesitation, on being required to take the most solemn of oaths, she, with sweetly reverential dignity, raised a bowl of burning incense and, holding it before her, spoke, in a voice of perfect music: "Before Shaka, God of life and death,—to whom my word goes up on this incense,—I swear, hanging my life on the answer, I have not seen this Kara!" Then, as the discomfited searchers withdrew, she stood for a moment, in the soft light streaming upon her from within the house, and, gazing after them, added, looking upward, "It is better to lie a little than to be unhappy much!" If she had done nothing else,—though the remainder of her professional life should be barren,—that single moment stamped her as a great actress.

"THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST."

David Belasco's play of "The Girl of the Golden West," which was produced at the old Belasco Theatre on November 14, 1905, and in which Blanche Bates made an auspicious success, is a fabric of situations contrived for the advantageous display of that old, familiar, everlasting, always effective theatrical personage, the Rough Diamond. The *Girl* was beautiful, intrepid, passionate, vivacious; the soul of innocence;

the incarnation of virtue; the blooming rose of vigorous health; and she could swear fluently, play cards, and shoot to kill. She kept a drinking shop; she was adored by all "the boys"; and the fame of her probity and her many fascinations filled the country-side of California, in the halycon days of '49. That fortunate State, according to the testimony of novelists and bards, was densely populated, at that time, by girls of this enchanting order; but this particular *Girl* seems to have transcended all rivals. She was beloved by a picturesque and expeditious outlaw, who had gained brilliant renown by means of highway robbery, and likewise she was beloved by the local *Sheriff*, a grim, obnoxious officer, self-dedicated to the wicked business of causing that outlaw's arrest and death. Both those lovers were ardent, and, between these two fires, her situation was difficult; but she always rose to the occasion, and when her outlaw was entrapped by his pursuer the ingenuity of her love and the dexterity of her stratagem delivered him from bondage, and, upon his promise of reformation and integrity, launched him upon a new and better career. The most conspicuous display of her passionate devotion and adroit skill occurred on a night when he was captured in her dwelling. The circumstances were essentially dramatic—for the *Girl* and her favored swain were stormbound in a mountain cabin, whither the *Sheriff* had tracked his prey; and the robber had been shot and wounded, so that there seemed to be no

method of escape for him,—till the *Girl* proposed a game of poker with his foe, staking herself against the liberty of her sweetheart, and won it by successful emulation of the *Heathen Chinee*,—substituting “an ace full” for an empty hand, at the decisive moment. There came a time, however, when even Love could do no more; but at that crisis Fate interposed, in the shape of Public Opinion,—that is to say, the friendship of “the boys,”—and the *Girl* and her lover were united.

The condition of California in 1849 was, to say the least of it, turbulent. Some parts of that State are in a turbulent condition now. Groups of “the boys” can still be discovered. They are not paragons, though, and they never were. The existence of good impulses in uncouth persons does not make them less uncouth. Fine qualities can, and do, exist in beings who are unfamiliar with soap and the tooth-brush; but it would seem that the study of human nature can be pursued, more agreeably than elsewhere, among saponaceous branches of the race. It is more pleasant to read about “the boys” than it is to see them. But, broadly speaking, in Belasco’s drama the *Girl* is the play, and with Miss Bates as the *Girl* there was but little more to be desired. Shorn of all extraneous fringes—variously impious, improper, vulgar, and offensive interjections of profanity and violent expletive—the play is the image of a lovely, impetuous woman’s devotion to her lover,—a devotion that is shown in a series of actions

done by her to save him from danger and ruin and to make him happy. Feminine heroism is the theme, and the *Girl* selected to exemplify it is meant to be "a child of nature," simple, direct, and true. Given that ideal to interpret, Miss Bates placed her reliance on Acting, and there were moments in her performance,—as, for example, in the First Act, as the *Girl* speaks of the protective instinct in the heart of woman,—when the soul that showed itself in her face was beatific. She gave, throughout, a personation of extraordinary variety and strength. In the situations devised for the heroine,—situations which, while not radically new, are ingeniously contrived and are fraught with the dominant spell of suspense,—the actress had to express the growth of love; the blissful sense of being loved; the bitter pangs of jealousy; the passionate resentment of a heart that thinks itself betrayed and wronged; the conflict of anger with affection; the apprehension of deadly peril, and the nobility of self-conquest. The exaction of the part is tremendous, equally upon physical resource and nervous vitality, but, at every point, it was met and satisfied. The play exemplifies its author's remarkable faculty of continuation in the making of characteristic dialogue, together with ample felicity of invention, and it is overlaid (perhaps too much so) with profusion of details. The midnight tryst of the *Girl* and the *Road Agent* is not a credible device, but, once assumed and arranged, that

situation,—comprehending the outlaw's detection as such by the *Girl*, the awakening of furious jealousy, her turning him out into the storm, her subsequent harboring of him, and the game of cards with the outlaw's life and liberty staked against the *Girl's* whole future,—is handled with consummate skill and moulded to splendid results, and there the acting of Miss Bates rose to a magnificent climax of emotion, fully expressed and yet artistically controlled and directed,—a triumph of intellectual purpose.

(On November 28, 1912, at her country home, near Ossining, New York, Miss Bates was married to Mr. George Creel, of Denver, Colorado.)

VIII.

THE ACTING OF MRS. FISKE.

"MAGDA."

THE play of "Magda" which Mrs. Fiske revived at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on February 27, 1898, provides opportunity for effective acting, and especially for the manifestation of that morbid, self-torturing, splenetic temperament which finds its best denotement in the intense, half-repressed, and half-spasmodic manner which came in with Clara Morris, which received a new impulse from Mme. Duse, and which Mrs. Fiske thought it desirable to adopt. Judicious observers were content with Mrs. Fiske's original manner, and they viewed her selection of *Magda* with keen regret. She played the part exceedingly well, but it was difficult to understand why an actress who can be so charming in better things should have condescended to such a character. Mrs. Fiske, it may be said, did all that can be done with Sudermann's wearisome type of fever and flurry, ill-balanced mentality and disordered nerves. In the one blithe passage of the play,—the coming of *Magda* to her old home,—the winning sweetness and the bright humor of the actress irradiated the scene, like

a sudden burst of sunshine. No one could be more charming than Mrs. Fiske was, in moments of happy buoyancy and playful exhilaration. She was exceedingly effective, likewise, in the expression of bitter scorn of the betrayer of *Magda*, in her utterance of satirical mockery of him, and in her assumption of exultant triumph when repelling his belated advances. Every opportunity of this kind was fully improved, and no doubt the prevision of the actress, as to what she could give of personal utterance in these situations, was a controlling influence in her selection of the character. Her faculty of impersonation, her individual force, and her incisive method were again exemplified; but those had long been known, and it did not require a *Magda* to prove them.

One of the great beauties of her embodiment was its fine discrimination of manner toward the different interlocutors,—a discrimination revealing keen perception of character, great knowledge of the world, and acute perception of the effect of experience upon individuality. Almost the only defect,—if not, indeed, the only one,—was a rapidity of enunciation which, overshooting its mark, produced an occasional effect of incoherence. Nature may be too natural. On the other hand, the speech about the development of a woman's nature, under the stress of sin and suffering,—meretricious though it is, and full of falsehood and flummery,—was beautiful with passionate eloquence and crystal clarity.

If anything could redeem this character it would be such acting as that of Mrs. Fiske, and it is recorded that her audience followed her performance with interest, and evinced sympathy with her portrayal of revolt against commonplace life, and especially with her humorous strokes of satire upon average stupidity. Most persons, perhaps, find the world dull, and are glad of anything that relieves its monotony.

"LITTLE ITALY."

Mrs. Fiske, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on March 30, 1899, produced a sombre play called "Little Italy," by the late Horace B. Fry, and acted the principal part in it. On the same evening, by way of emphasizing her vocational versatility, she revived an English adaptation of Sardou's "Divorçons," and acted *Cyprienne*. In "Little Italy," which is reminiscent of the quality of "Cavalleria Rusticana," she impersonated a poor Italian exile, who, from an environment of poverty and trouble, goes involuntarily to her death, in a wild, vain effort to leave the trammels of her sordid life and return to the sunshine, indolent peace, and dream-like happiness of her native land. The scene is the "Italian quarter" of New York. The woman is the wife of a coarse Italian shopkeeper, with whom she is badly matched and with whom she dwells in discontent. The dramatic situation is made to ensue

from her hearing music in the street, made by her lover, who is a vagrant from Italy. That situation involves a colloquy between the wife and the lover and their agreement to return home together. The lover awaits her in the street, but, in endeavoring to escape furtively, by means of a lift, the woman is killed; and, at the close, the husband and the lover are confronted, in a strife of agony and fury, in the presence of her dead body.

The author of the play—which is neatly constructed and smoothly written, in one act,—had, of course, observed that humble life affords no exemption from the misery that is sequent upon unhappy marriage, or from the tragedy that is possibly attendant upon thwarted love and broken faith. His drama is more picture than action, and it suggests more than it displays. To use the kitchen-lift, or dumb-waiter, as a means of causing accidental death was to employ a rough and dubious expedient and to imperil the effect of tragic horror by taking the risk of derision. In the world of fact such things, no doubt, do happen, but, in the realm of art, the instrument of fate must never be absurd. The essential charm of Mr. Fry's work,—a charm so delicate that it might readily pass unnoticed,—is its suggestiveness of vague, tearful, desolate emotion, the strange longing for home and rest, for other days and other scenes, that may suddenly be awakened by the scent of a flower, or the sound of

distant music, or the murmur of the wind in the leaves. Byron has said it, once and forever, in the beautiful words of "Childe Harold":

"And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside forever; it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."

Mrs. Fiske's acting afforded a shining proof that a strong personality, far from being incompatible with the greatest histrionic skill, is perfectly harmonious with it. Her identity was absolutely merged in that of the passionate, sorrow-stricken, common Italian woman, and yet her distinctive personality, animating the embodiment and making it painfully true, was not for one moment eclipsed. She did not simply assume a disguise: she absorbed and reproduced an imagined type of human nature, causing it to be vitalized by all her human powers, and made a living thing; and this is *acting*, as the art has been shown by every great actor that ever lived. The performance of *Julia* is only a sketch, but in its denotement of knowledge of woman's heart and of human sufferings, in the skill to express it (as in the poor creature's ecstasy at sight of her lover, from whom she had been cruelly parted, to be forced into a hateful marriage), the embodiment had

afflictive power and meaning. Mr. Frederic de Belleville assumed the coarse, ignorant, ardent, animal-like Italian husband, and was terrific in his fidelity to the wilder passions. Attenuated to five acts, "Little Italy" would, probably, be deemed a respectable tragedy: circumscribed within one, it is a trial sample of tragic climax. Its merit is positive. Mr. Fry composed, for its musical illustration, a dirge-like accompaniment not less touching than weird.

"TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES."

Readers who thoughtfully observe the drift of contemporary fiction are aware that Thomas Hardy is a novelist of extraordinary power,—one who sees clearly the facts of human life, and who writes of them with humor and pathos, and in a style remarkable for boldness, vigor, imagination, and grace. The novel that made him famous is "Far from the Madding Crowd," and perhaps that work, in originality of conception, depth of feeling, scope and variety of character, and beauty of language, is the best that has proceeded from his pen. In almost all of Hardy's books, and especially in "Tess," human life is portrayed in its painful aspects, and the drift is almost exclusively tragical. Many attributes of excellence in those writings might be specified. The humor, in some of them, is wonderfully rich. The English peasants, in particular, are true and fine. The knowledge of woman is comprehensive and accurate,

—the fidelity with which she is drawn, in many and diversified types, being so exact and coldly true as almost to seem cruel. But the pervading quality of Hardy's novels,—the attribute that transcends all others,—is their intimation of the terrible, inexorable sweep of fate. In that respect they affiliate with the great classics of literature, and bear onward, in a modern guise and a romantic attire, the tradition of "Orestes" and "King Lear." "*Tess*" is an exemplification of all the horrors of malignant destiny. By nature its heroine is incarnate goodness: every fibre of her being is pure: and yet, under the stress of circumstances, the compulsion of force and the beguilement of fraud, partly through ignorance, partly through delirium and desperation, she is harassed, degraded, despoiled, plunged into misery, goaded to the insane commission of homicide, and finally is hanged for murder. The story is in no way extravagant. It reads like truth. A spirit of passionate sincerity glows in every page of it, and its literary art is exceedingly beautiful. For a reader it seems to speak with the awful voice of that unseen power,—that nameless angel of darkness and death,—with whom the predestined *Œdipus* kept the fatal tryst and then disappeared forever.

All this beauty and all this frightful significance vanish at once when the story of *Tess* is transplanted to the stage. The principal persons who are implicated in it, and, to some extent, their relations to one

another, can be shown. The atmosphere, the subtlety, the complexity of motive, the variety of conduct, the dignity, the poetry, the feeling,—those attributes which constitute the essential style and soul of a great fabric of art,—are completely lost. The book is a tragedy. The play is the love-story of a female in distress. *Tess* is no longer *Tess*; she is only that old, familiar figure, the Woman with a Past. She has been betrayed by a libertine, but, that episode being over, she is married to a gentleman, and when the betrayer reappears she kills him; and then she repairs to Stonehenge, toward sunrise, and there, although this is left to conjecture, she is supposed to die in a perpendicular attitude. The purpose of the novelist,—the artistic purpose, which is as ancient as Æschylus, and which alone could justify the presentment of such a theme,—the purpose to arouse pity and terror, humanizing to the heart and exalting to the mind,—is completely ignored. Theatrical conventionality of method, employed with a ruthless precision which seems almost comic, mars a work of transcendent genius.

In the novel the principal scene is that of the explanation between *Tess* and her husband, together with the subsequent somnambulism, before their separation. In a play those situations, if used, would appear ridiculous. The part actually introduced, so far from being either tragic or pathetic, conveys only an impression of indelicacy, ill-breeding, and bad taste. Great

representative novels of the English language,—such books as “Vathek,” “Anastasius,” “Ivanhoe,” “The Antiquary,” “Old Mortality,” “Harold,” “Zanoni,” “Henry Esmond,” “The Newcomes,” “Lorna Doone,” “The Scarlet Letter,” and “The Cloister and the Hearth,”—cannot be adequately interpreted by any known dramatic process. Left to themselves, each one of them is a blessing; garbled for the Stage and turned into something that is neither story nor play, any one of them becomes a burden. It is much to be regretted, accordingly, that such treasures of literary art should ever be disturbed by the devastating hand of experimental playwrights. The novels of Hardy contain, for a reader, dramatic elements that powerfully affect the imagination, but those elements dwindle when they are subjected to the scrutiny of the eye, in the narrow confines of a stage. In thinking of that poor, exhausted, wretched *Tess*, sleeping on the ground, among the mysterious giant rocks of Stonehenge, while her lover and the officers of the law await her awakening, the heart is wrung with anguish and the mind is stricken with awe. On the stage that picture would cause no effect.

Mrs. Fiske produced “Tess of the D’Urbervilles” on May 2, 1897, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, and subsequently presented it in many cities, throughout the United States. The play is comprised in four acts. The first of them is burdened with prattle. Three dis-

contented virgins, one of whom is bibulous, incommode the scene and delay the movement: one of them, in the original production, was admirably acted by Miss Annie Irish. The beginning of Act Second is encumbered, in like manner, with needless persons and untimely chatter. The heroine, *Tess*, has been betrayed by a scoundrel, and has become a mother without having become a wife. Her child has died, and she has found employment and has received an offer of marriage. She wishes to make her suitor acquainted with her unfortunate experience, and she writes a confession and places it within his reach, promising to become his wife if, after having read that letter, he is willing to marry her. Her mother takes away the letter and puts a rose in its place, and thereupon the projected marriage occurs, but, on returning from church, both the husband and the wife confess previous incontinence, and then the husband repudiates the wife and leaves her. Later, believing him to be dead, and being in penury and distress, she accepts the protection of her betrayer, and that scoundrel presently treats her with great brutality. Her husband unexpectedly returns, and in her anger she kills the ruffian by whom she has been seduced, and she then goes, with her husband, to Stonehenge, where they are overtaken by the police.

In the earlier part of her busy and brilliant professional career Mrs. Fiske charmed the public by her blithe temperament and sprightly demeanor, her sparkle

and dash. Later she became impressed with a sense of serious purpose in acting, and drifted into the style which has been designated "emotional." She had glittered as a sunbeam: she elected to glitter as a tear. But Mrs. Fiske is a woman of more intellect than feeling, and when she appeared as *Tess* she was more intellectual than emotional. Her performance possessed charm, but not any authentic show of passion. She was remarkably sympathetic in her simulation of mirth, immediately after the wedding. In the first scene of the Fourth Act, which terminates with the murder, she was singularly ineffective, by reason of her continuous maintenance of a stony demeanor of complete congelation. The act of murder (which ought to have been shown by the dramatist and ought to have been done, quickly, in a frenzy of passion) was done off-stage, out of sight, and the effect was made undramatic and trivial by a sort of artificially intense, over-repressed manner. An assumption of horror-frozen calm might have proved strikingly effective, if suddenly used after any previous protracted, convincing display of deep emotion. Mrs. Fiske's *Tess* was endowed with mind, power, repose, grace, and singularity, but it did not in the least resemble the *Tess* of Hardy's novel. Her performance, nevertheless, was greatly admired and it was accepted with abundant favor, for a long time, all over the country. Charles Coghlan's impersonation of the clever, cynical sensualist,—at first crafty

in his passion, and afterward brutal in his profligate baseness,—was truth itself.

“BECKY SHARP.”

An important event of the dramatic season of 1899-1900 in New York was the appearance of Mrs. Fiske as *Becky Sharp*, in a play of that name, by Mr. Langdon Mitchell, produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on September 12, 1899. That bold venture revived the great subject of Thackeray's writings and influence. The intellect, benignity, tolerant patience, tender gravity, unerring insight, comprehensive knowledge, delicious, lambent humor, fancy, deep feeling, inventive and constructive skill, and the flexible style of that beneficent writer are more fully and authoritatively manifested in his novel of “Henry Esmond” than in any other single one of his works, and “Esmond,” accordingly, can be regarded as his supreme achievement. Next among Thackeray's writings stands “Vanity Fair.” In that book the predominant qualities are broad and clear vision; merciless satire of evil and wrong; satirical humor mingled with sadness; just censure softened by occasional intimations of pity; wonderfully graphic portraiture of character and manners; and a puissant vigor of spontaneous style that keeps the reader interested to the end. “Vanity Fair” is the most brilliant and the most sadly bitter of all the writings of the greatest of modern novelists. There

cannot be a doubt of its truth, but, baleful though that truth may be, it is invariably told to beneficial purpose.

All votaries of the great satirist who have followed his shining track, from "The Great Hoggarty Diamond" to "Denis Duval," are aware of the tenor of his philosophy. Human nature, while possessed of virtues and capable of heroism, is marred by miserable and shocking infirmities, and its capacity for selfishness, meanness, and every form of baseness is without limit. Thackeray saw this, and knew it to be true, and, observing in every direction the busy schemes of covetous desire, the hardness of insensate vulgarity, and the prosperity of hypocrisy and fraud, he could not restrain his satire of mankind. He has often been miscalled a cynic. Women, in particular, seldom like him, for the reason that he sees them as they are, and laughs at their pettiness, malice, cruelty, and spite, while reverencing their goodness and deeply and tenderly commiserating their many trials and sorrows. But no man in literature has shown a broader vision, a more considerate charity, or a more tender heart. No painter of human nature and human life, since Shakespeare, is as great, except Walter Scott. No writer in any age has said words of more solemn import to the human race, and no writer is more worthy of universal study. Every influence, therefore, should be heartily welcomed which tends, in any degree, to promote the reading of



Photograph by Aped's Studio.

Courtesy of Harrison Grey Fiske, Esq.

MRS. FISKE

III

Becky Sharp, in "Becky Sharp" ("Vanity Fair").

Thackeray. There never was a time when his satire was more needed than it is now, and although the cutting and carving of the great novels of our language, for the purpose of utilizing them on the stage, is not commendable, seeing that a great novel is inevitably dwarfed when transmuted into a play, Mrs. Fiske's presentment of the play of "Becky Sharp" probably did serve the salutary purpose of causing many persons to make, or to renew, acquaintance with Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," of which that play is a partial abstract and brief epitome.

In the light of experience, not to say of reason, it ought not to be expected that a play will ever do entire justice to a fine novel. The dramatist, like the novelist, works with colloquy; but where the novelist employs narrative, which is his principal means, the dramatist must employ action; and narrative and action are seldom, if ever, interchangeable. The reader of the narrative of *David Dodd's* sea fight, in Reade's "Hard Cash," or of *John Ridd's* rescue of *Lorna* from her terribly perilous captivity, in Blackmore's "Lorna Doone," is swept along in a fever of excitement, because, to the imagination, the scene is actual, and nothing is present to dissipate the atmosphere of romantic reality. The same thing, presented to the vision, would be judged as a fact, and, so judged, it would be found inadequate, because comparatively lifeless and tame. In "Vanity Fair," of which *Becky Sharp* is the central

character, the most telling points, with little exception, are such as could not be shown, theatrically, with any effect. Some of those points are readily remembered—such, for example, as the scene of *Jos. Sedley's* inebriety at Vauxhall; *Dobbin's* purchase of *Amelia's* piano, at the auction; old *Sedley's* impartment, to his wife, of the news of their financial ruin; *Dobbin's* interview with that broken merchant, at the Tapioca Coffee-house; the quarrel between *George Osborne* and his father, about the “Hottentot Venus,” *Miss Swartz*; the picture of *Dobbin* standing on the church steps, in the rain, after *George* and *Amelia*, just married, have driven away; the lonely, pathetic, awful night, in old *Osborne's* study, when that grim, bitter, afflicted worldling erases his son's name from the family Bible and prepares to disinherit him by destroying his will; the incident of *Amelia's* pretence of being asleep when her husband, in momentary remorse for his vicious neglect, bends over her pillow; the heart-breaking pathos of *Amelia's* remonstrance with *Becky Sharp*, after the march of the troops from Brussels; *Osborne's* reception of the letter from *George*,—dead and gone, and unforgiven; the picture of *Osborne*, in his pew, at the Foundling Church, looking up at the mural tablet, newly placed, to commemorate his son, who has been killed in battle; the visit of the morose but suffering parent to the field of Waterloo; *Amelia's* discovery that she owes her piano (that forlorn waif, rescued from the

bankrupt sale) to the unselfish affection of *Dobbin*, and not, as she had believed, to the tender thoughtfulness of her husband; *Becky Sharp's* demure behavior when singing Mozart's religious songs to *Lady Gaunt*; the patient grief of the widowed *Amelia*, who must part with her boy, and who listens while he reads to her the Bible story of the infant Samuel given to the high priest to serve before the Lord; *Dobbin's* parting from *Amelia* when, after fifteen years of self-sacrificing devotion, he breaks her chain and declares himself to be free; and, finally, the meeting between *Dobbin* and *Amelia*, on the rain-beaten pier at Ostend, when at last that noble gentleman wins the poor little prize of his life-long desire. Those incidents of the novel may seem dramatic to the mind, but they would not be dramatic to the eye. No felicity of dramatic treatment could make them effective on the stage. The difficulty is radical. A picture does not move, and the story of "Vanity Fair," however expeditious it may seem to the mental gaze of a reader, is essentially a picture. The only current of practical, cumulative action that it suggests is the intrigue between *Becky Sharp* (*Mrs. Rawdon Crawley*) and *Lord Steyne*,—culminating in *Steyne's* punishment and *Becky's* exposure, downfall, and exile. The rest is narrative interspersed with commentary; and narrative and commentary do not become dramatically propulsive from being,—though even in the highest degree,—satirically humorous, brilliant, and wise.

Lord Steyne's intrigue with *Becky Sharp*,—as, indeed, was inevitable,—was chosen by Mr. Langdon Mitchell as the central theme for his play,—and in four artfully planned, neatly constructed, and tersely written acts that dramatist partly told and largely indicated the story of a wily, subtle adventuress, who unscrupulously sought for money and social position, and who came to grief, at last, through imprudence and ill luck. *Becky Sharp*, in the play, is not presented because she is good, nor because she is evil, but because she is physically attractive and mentally clever. By way of providing an animated background and also an episode of suspense, incidental to the *Steyne* intrigue, the ball at Brussels on the night before Waterloo was, by the dramatist, transposed, newly and variously embellished,—in the spirit of Byron's splendid stanzas about it, in "*Childe Harold*,"—and exceedingly well utilized. How well the task was done,—with what a keen perception of possible theatrical effect, what adroitness in the arrangement of sequent details, and what verbal ingenuity,—those persons only can fully appreciate who are familiar with the novel. Mr. Mitchell's drama, indeed, is coherent and intelligible by itself, and yet a precise knowledge of the novel will deepen the reader's enjoyment of the play, because it will enable him to round out the characters, where those have only been sketched, and to perceive the practical talent with which a difficult subject has been treated. At most

times the language is that of the dramatist, but at some times the language is that of the novel, and some of Thackeray's dialogue has been woven into the fabric of the colloquy, and numerous preliminary incidents of the original are condensed and specified in the opening display of the relations of the characters to one another. The foreground epitomizes *Becky Sharp's* life up to the climax of her runaway match with *Rawdon Crawley*, and shows how *George Osborne* and *Amelia Sedley* have been privately married, and that *Dobbin* is wearing the willow. The ball at Brussels follows, in the course of which *George Osborne's* flirtation with *Becky* reaches the bouquet and concealed note epoch; *Becky's* conquest of *Lord Steyne* is foreshadowed; *Jos. Sedley's* absurd eccentricities and foolish proceedings are comically displayed; the gambling tricks of *Becky* and *Rawdon* are shown and emphasized; and the solemn effect of hilarious festivities suddenly broken and held in a chill of anguish, suspense, and dismay, by the opening roar of the cannon of Waterloo, is superbly created. Later *George Osborne* is dead, *Amelia* has rejected the faithful *Dobbin*, and *Becky* is reigning in her pretty little London house, in Curzon Street, beset with duns and difficulties; and so comes on the tragedy of the adventurer. *Becky* has cheated and swindled one of her husband's guests, her iniquity has been discovered, and she makes a compact with *Lord Steyne* to grant him a private meeting if he will pay her debts. She lies to

her husband; she meanly connives at his arrest; she makes ready for utter perdition; and, in a most painful and shocking scene, she is suddenly overtaken by the stroke of exposure which is retributive fate. The climax is a burst of horrible hysterics, of mingled anger, shame, delirium, and despair.

Mrs. Fiske,—radiant with physical vivacity and with satirical pleasantry throughout the greater part of the performance,—was magnificent at that juncture, causing breathless suspense, and winning the sympathetic response that true and deep emotion, adequately uttered, always gives to natural passion and authentic power.

The ethical question arises, and observers who look below the surface ask whether it was worth while to put *Becky Sharp* on the stage. Opinions differ. Mrs. Fiske gave a fine impersonation of intrinsic wickedness, fraught with the obvious and perfectly conventional moral that evil is hideous and is predestined to ultimate failure. There is, however, a sweeter way of doing good than the way of showing the vice which should be shunned, and that is the way of showing the virtue which should be emulated. People are better and happier for passing an hour with *Dr. Primrose* than for passing an hour with *Iago*. But good can be dramatically shown only by contrast with evil, and the greatest of writers, with Shakespeare at their head, have always presented that contrast. The essential thing is the manner of the presentment. The ethical

defect of Mr. Mitchell's play is that its lights are low and its shadows heavy. Viewed as a total reproduction of "Vanity Fair," it might as well be called "Sally Blunt" as "Becky Sharp." In the novel human nature is shown at its best as well as its worst. Even *Becky*,—liar, thief, swindler, impostor, presumptive adulteress, unprincipled and corrupt,—is endowed with traits that half redeem her depravity: she is good-natured, blithe, buoyant, brilliant, seductive, and, on occasion, capable of kindness. In the play,—although she helps to unite *Amelia* and *Dobbin*, by exposing the fraudulent character of the sainted *George*,—*Becky* is scarcely anything more than the unrelieved incarnation of vicious, repulsive, aggressive selfishness. The subduing effect of perfectly natural surroundings, such as are given in the novel, are lacking in the play, and this helps to make *Becky's* baseness more conspicuous. Many of the persons associated with her in the original are excluded, and those that are retained are, necessarily, much modified. *Dobbin* and *Amelia*, in particular,—one of the noblest of men and one of the sweetest of women,—dwindle into wooden images. Old *Osborne* and his daughters, old *Sedley* and his wife, the gallant *O'Dowd* and his glorious *Peggy*, the bold *McMurdo*, the *Rev. Bute Crawley*, scheming *Mrs. Bute* (that paragon of propriety and superserviceable zeal), and *James*, whose "pipe is put out" in one of Thackeray's most delicious scenes of character and humor, are among the many,

cherished acquaintances that do not appear. *Becky* predominates,—the symbol of worldly wickedness; wrong because she cannot help it; sometimes wishful to be right; hopelessly entangled; driven on from bad to worse, and, quite unconsciously, a living appeal to human pity.

With reference to bad men and women, it is, of course, always to be remembered that evil as well as good is elemental in nature, and that evil as well as good exists and flourishes according to the operation of heredity, education, and environment. The tiger is born a tiger, even as the lamb is born a lamb, and neither of them is responsible for the fact of birth. There may be such a thing as total depravity, but, if so, it is a form of insanity. As a rule, no human being exists whose nature does not contain some grains of goodness. The universal obligation, accordingly, is that of charity. That obligation, and that alone, was suggested, as a final result, by the stage presentment of the character of *Becky Sharp*. Persons can be made sympathetic in books who would not be sympathetic in actual life, and persons who would not be sympathetic in actual life can never be made sympathetic on the stage. *Becky Sharp*, on paper, can be admired and even liked: nothing could be more delicious than *Becky*, when discomfiting such a pompous ass as *Lady Bare-acres*: but *Becky*, actually in the flesh, visible and understood, would evoke no liking, but only commingled

distrust, consternation, aversion, and sorrow. *Becky* is a sparkling and dangerous little Bohemian, reckless of consequences and possessed of a tremendous will. She knows the world, knows human nature, knows how good people and weak people and foolish people are certain to act, under all sorts of circumstances, and she uses that knowledge to make her way to worldly success. She expends prodigious energy within a narrow field, overreaches herself, and miserably fails. The dramatist, causing her to play with loaded dice, and converting *Rawdon Crawley* into a card-sharper, has made criminals of them both and has involved them in imminent peril; and thereupon he has represented *Becky* as willing to obtain pecuniary assistance and personal immunity by a surrender, in which there is not even the pretence of passion, to the degrading suit of the profligate *Steyne*. Such a woman is worse than a professed wanton, and this woman is the more despicably guilty because she is a traitor to her husband, who really loves her, as well as to everybody else. And then comes the catastrophe,—when *Rawdon Crawley*, being released from captivity, surprises his wife, in the glittering, terrible, tragical midnight scene with her libidinous suitor. That climax was contrived with skill, and it was the supreme moment of the drama. All that followed was tame. In the last act *Becky* fleeces *Jos. Sedley*, the fat epicure, imposes on *Sir Pitt Crawley*, the foolish prig, and vanishes as a demure hypocrite, intent to

prosper by pretending to be pious. So Thackeray himself left her, in his charming letter that came to light in 1888:

"*Mrs. Crawley*," he said, "now lives in a small but very pretty house in Belgravia, and is conspicuous for her numerous charities, which always get into the newspapers, and her unaffected piety. Many of the most exalted and spotless of her own sex visit her, and are of opinion that she is a most injured woman."

Mrs. Fiske's impersonation of *Becky Sharp* revealed a distinct ideal, and it was remarkable for its physical as well as mental brilliancy, its clear and pure verbal utterance, and its splendid energy of sustained, yet thoroughly concealed, artistic effort. The element in *Becky's* character which is chiefly fascinating is her sprightly and refreshing intolerance of stupid conventionality. That shows itself in scornful satire of asses and prigs, arrogant conceit, empty ostentation, and pretentious folly. That attribute of the character was made delightfully clear by Mrs. Fiske, and the actress also consistently maintained a certain feverish buoyancy and glittering excitement. It would be useless to make *Becky Sharp* as callous and as flippantly frivolous on the stage as she often is in the book, for that would defeat dramatic purpose. Mrs. Fiske furnished what the dramatist omitted,—*Becky's* idea of her self-justification; for, artfully, she laid a strong emphasis on the memory of *Becky's* ill-treated and misguided childhood, and also on her inherent inability to escape from the

blight of evil ways. The performance had wonderful variety,—its demeanor fluctuating from demure gravity and sweet candor to mordant bitterness, and its moods of feeling ranging from icy sarcasm and merry banter to passionate excitement and frenzied despair. The personality commonly denoted as the woman of the world has not, in our day, been better portrayed; and, as a general judgment on play and performance, it can with truth be said that Mr. Mitchell got more out of the book of “Vanity Fair,” for dramatic purposes, than anybody else who ever touched the subject, and that Mrs. Fiske gave to one of the most truthful, brilliant, and wonderful creations of fiction a visible, glittering, and lasting “form and pressure.” Her success was great. The general representation was largely composed of fine bits. *Rawdon Crawley* was finely played by Maurice Barrymore, who gave an uncommonly touching display of the subduing and softening effect of love upon a raw, rough nature. Tyrone Power incarnated the depravity of *Lord Steyne* with grisly, eccentric force and, whether hovering darkly on the fringes of the festival or fiercely urging his base passion, was a figure of gaunt, grim strength, baleful significance and unspeakable wickedness. Mr. Barrymore had not before, for a long time, done such ample justice to his fine powers. *Rawdon’s* good-by to *Becky*, before Waterloo; his reading of the letter from his boy, his weakness in *Becky’s* hands, his terrible anger

and misery in looking on her disgrace,—in each of these he touched the heart. Both those actors, and also Mrs. Fiske, especially manifested fine artistic instinct in making the scene of the exposure and the punishment intense, not boisterous. The effect of horror, of suffering, of veritable tragedy (for each participant suffers in a different and poignant way), might easily have been ruined. The impersonation of *Jos. Sedley* by William F. Owen is remembered as one of the best studies of Thackeray ever presented. The redoubtable *Jos.*, vain, silly, and gluttonous braggart though he be, provides the chief element of humor in “Vanity Fair,” and, as acted by Mr. Owen, he furnished much of the sunshine of “Becky Sharp.”

“LEAH KLESCHNA.”

In the Manhattan Theatre, New York, on December 12, 1904, Mrs. Fiske achieved a remarkable success and added a new character not only to her repertory but to the permanent population of the acted drama. The play, written by C. M. S. McLellan, was “Leah Kleschna” (then acted for the first time), and that is also the name of the central character. The scene is laid mostly in Paris. The time is the present. The nomenclature,—which might have been improved,—is French and German. The play is entirely original. Mr. McLellan has emphatically denied that any other plays exist affording a basis for his work. *Leah*, a

young woman of handsome aspect and fine nature, is represented as the daughter of a professional thief, and as having been trained, by him, to the vocation of theft. In the practice of that pernicious industry she encounters, under peculiarly interesting circumstances, a good man, who, instead of delivering her to the ministry of law, shields her from arrest, saves her from the consequences of her crimes, arouses in her mind the latent impulse to virtue, prompts her to reform, enables her to accomplish her moral regeneration and, eventually, makes her his wife. That good man, by name *Paul Sylvaine*, designated as a member of the French Assembly, announces precisely the ethical doctrine of the saintly old bishop in Victor Hugo's famous novel, "Les Misérables." Total depravity does not exist. Human nature contains more good than evil. Neither man nor woman can fall so far as to pass beyond the possibility of redemption. The criminal, no matter of what variety, is always susceptible to kind treatment, and always can be reformed. In other words, *Sylvaine's* posture is that of the Christ-like humanitarian and reformer—a sympathetic, interesting, and laudable posture, but one that can be, and in theatrical depiction, as well as in life, often has been, pushed to extravagance.

"There is no one," says that enthusiastic statesman, "that is not worth rescuing, and there is no one who cannot be rescued. I believe in every one of us; that every one of us is a part of truth; and the thief that

comes into my home is only a spectre of madness, of unhappiness, of disease, and not the human being. That spectre cannot destroy my faith. Whatever ugliness it assumes, I know it is a lie and an illusion. It only veils the soul, the universal soul, which is love, and does not know sin: Love—but lost in darkness; the same darkness through which the whole world is struggling,—the thief a little more helpless than the rest.” Part of this sounds like hysterical nonsense to any man who has thoroughly and thoughtfully read the history of the nations and is acquainted with the authentic records of individual crime; but such views are hopeful, and those persons who choose to preach are wise to preach hope rather than despair. So Tennyson taught, in words never to be forgotten:

“Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood;

“That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

In a play, however, seeing that a play should not be a sermon, the better way to deliver a moral is to suggest it by deed, and not to impart it by word. Both methods are used in the drama of “Leah Kleschna,” with

the result that, to some extent, action is burdened with didacticism; and didacticism, in a play, is always tedious. The *Vicar of Wakefield*, when he pardons his erring daughter and clasps her in his arms, does more, in that one instant, for charity and virtue,—the help of the weak and the comfort of the wretched,—than he could do in a hundred sermons. The ethics of “Leah Kleschna,” though, do not obscure its dramatic values, and the public had not seen such an effective piece, of this kind,—the kind in which stirring incident is commingled with moral philosophy—since the distant days of “The Ticket-of-Leave Man,” “It Is Never Too Late to Mend,” and “Mary Warner.”

Mrs. Fiske has, from time to time, manifested a peculiar partiality for plays of an ethical and didactic character; that is to say, plays that aim to teach moral lessons. That is not a healthful propensity. There is too much theatrical solicitude and too much fussing about Morality. The individual who will attend to his own morals will do enough; it is not essential that he should endeavor to regulate the morals of other persons. Everybody not a fool knows the difference between right and wrong, and, certainly, the theatrical audience, in general, stands in no need of information as to either the Revised Statutes, the Ten Commandments, or the Sermon on the Mount. The notion that the Theatre is expected to provide moral instruction has led, in our time, to a theatrical display of mental obliquity and

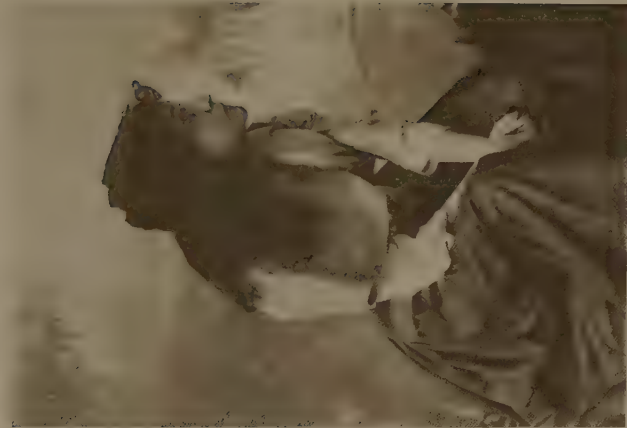
physical disease in comparison with which the gross, rubicund, libidinous, and monstrous plays of the Restoration are innocence itself; for the dramatic moralist thinks that he is at perfect liberty to exhibit any sort of enormity if only, after three hours of his putrid show, he tells you to avoid evil. Delirious inebriates, sick harlots, humpbacked, spavined, pock-marked, splay-footed, scorbutic cranks, male and female, some of them from France, some from Norway, some from Germany, some from Italy, and—sad to say!—some from England, have swarmed over our Stage, till, at last, it has sometimes become difficult for the spectator to determine whether he is in a theatre or a hospital: and, strangely enough, the purveyors of this tainted trash proclaim that it is representative of Ideas! It was a great relief therefore when Mrs. Fiske laid aside her assortment of *Magdas*, *Gablers*, and *Crazy Janes*, and chose the play of “Leah Kleschna,” for she acquired a play which, though to some extent ethical, is, to a greater extent, dramatic. As drama, indeed, the play is excellent. The plot, while simple, is substantial—possessing a body, and not being flimsily composed of “limbs and outward flourishes”; the situations occur in a rational sequence, each of them being fraught with an atmosphere of suspense, and each of them (until the end of the Fourth Act), as to dramatic effect, being stronger than its predecessor; the incidents, occurring

rapidly, are such as surprise but do not mystify; and the principal characters, sharply drawn, are such as require acting and provide opportunity for it. For *Leah*, in particular, the opportunity is spacious, and Mrs. Fiske splendidly improved it.

Two thieves, *Kleschna* and *Schram*, together with *Leah*, the daughter of *Kleschna*, were passengers aboard the steamship *Marseilles*, which was wrecked and lost, off the Italian coast, in the Mediterranean Sea. The passengers embarked in a lifeboat. The storm was fierce. The captain was swept overboard and drowned. One of the imperilled passengers seized the boat's helm: controlled the situation; pacified his panic-stricken companions in danger, and effected a safe landing. That intrepid, expeditious, and capably executive person was *Paul Sylvaine*, member of the French Assembly, and it was under those circumstances that, without knowing his name, *Leah Kleschna* first saw him. A year later, in Paris, *Kleschna* and *Schram* attempted to rob *Sylvaine* of his family jewels, sending *Leah* into his house, at dead of night, to commit the crime; but they were baffled by *Sylvaine's* discovery of the thief and by *Leah's* simultaneous discovery of the identity of *Sylvaine* with the hero of the shipwreck, whom, secretly, she had all along worshipped. In that manner they met again; and from this meeting ensued the dramatic situations that make the play—a play that is edifying, no

doubt, by what it signifies of philanthropic wisdom, but one that pleases far more by what it is than by what it means. The skill with which *Sylvaine*, in his magnanimous conduct, is at first apparently compromised and later is exonerated is particularly admirable. The fate of the jewels,—which, after *Leah* has left the home of *Sylvaine*, are stolen by *Raoul Berton*, a dissolute rascal, brother to a woman whom *Sylvaine* has promised to marry,—and the fate of *Kleschna* and *Schram* are left in darkness: but a superb situation is contrived for *Leah* when she prevents *Sylvaine* from disclosing to *Raoul's* father the criminality of the son; and a still more thrilling situation is made for her when she breaks away from her criminal associates, ingeniously saving them at the same time when—in a higher sense—she saves herself. The drama closes with a rural picture of extraordinary scenic beauty.

The difficult province of Mrs. Fiske, as *Leah*, was not only to reveal the development of goodness in the girl's temporarily perverted nature,—a development in part prompted by native impulse and in part fostered by the operation of secret love for a noble ideal,—but also to animate tumultuous scenes of trial and action, so as to fill them with emotion and make them live and move. The part is fraught with fever and fluctuation, broken with warring impulses, vital with passionate feeling, and arduous with the iron necessity of executive promptitude. The actress found herself



*From a Photograph by Sarony.
In the Collection of the Author.*

Tess, in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles."



*From a Photograph.
In the Collection of the Author.*

Leah, in "Leah Kleschna."

MRS. FISKE
as

absolutely at ease in it,—partly because it is lawless,—and she produced a moving effect of nature, because she made her auditors feel and understand how hard this world is for the outcast and through what a terrible ordeal the sinner must pass,—the poor soul who, whether from innate propensity or extraneous compulsion, has once gone wrong but would like to go right. The brittle articulation and rising inflections characteristic of her habitual speech were a help rather than a hindrance, in this eccentric, kaleidoscopic part, and her passionate impetuosity thrilled every fibre of it. In *Leah's* ultimate defiance of *Kleschna* and in the conquest of his brute strength by her moral supremacy and spiritual fervor she rose to a noble height of powerful feeling and carried the scene to a magnificent climax. The action ended there. A pastoral beatitude occurred at the close, pictorial, not dramatic, and therefore tame.

The several more important parts were judiciously cast; and the occasion was made exceptionally interesting by the association of such able actors as Mrs. Fiske, John Mason, George Arliss, and Charles Cartwright. *Kleschna* is an intellectual, resolute, formidable ruffian, of the class that is well typified by Balzac's *Autrin*, in "Père Goriot": not such a consummate scoundrel and not as splendidly drawn; but a potent villain, one who is accustomed to read and think; one who has persuaded himself that all men are rascals, and that when he

steals the property of another person he is only doing with the secret hand what all other men would do openly, opportunity afforded, on "business principles." Still more, he is the kind of man who would stop at nothing to accomplish his object. *Schram* is a weaker villain, kinder and more inclined to vacillation. The most loathsome type of evil is *Raoul Berton*, a vile sensualist, mean, cowardly, vulgar, completely depraved. Mr. Arliss acted that part and made it painfully actual and sadly true, passing through the sharply contrasted moods of jaunty impudence, mean cunning, comic levity, viperish rage, and hysterical, abject fear. Mr. Cartwright impersonated *Kleschna* and well expressed the hardened, cynical criminal, in whom, nevertheless, there are latent manliness, human feeling, and the potentiality of heroism. It was, in fact, the complete embodiment of a resolute, intellectual man, possessing courage and skill, but deficient of moral sense and strengthened in evil propensity by bitter resentment of social injustice. The spectacle presented, all the world over, of poverty, hardship, and vice has turned many brains and made many bandits. *Kleschna* has that mental twist, and Mr. Cartwright's personation was at once illuminating and afflictive. Mr. Mason, as *Sylvaine*, presented a fine image of gentle feeling, dignity, reticence, and exquisite grace of manner. Intellectual poise, compassionate feeling, and moral enthusiasm could not be expressed with a greater show, or a greater effect, of sincerity.

"HEDDA GABLER."

All persons are, in one sense, diseased and hastening toward the grave. In some cases the disease is known and named, and the time of the inevitable obsequies can be predicted with approximate precision. In other cases the disease is incipient, and hope fluctuates as to the probable arrival of the final catastrophe. But there is no doubt as to either the present condition or the ultimate result. All flesh is grass; all grass will be cut down, dried up, and, necessarily, withered; and, sooner or later, the universal hay crop will be gathered in.

"You are bones, and what of that?

Every face, however full,

Padded round with flesh and fat,

Is but modelled on a skull."

Those remarkably sapient views were, in general, the views of the late Mr. Ibsen, of Norway, and those views,—with others, about hereditary disease, original sin, miscellaneous humbug, and taxes,—he was at great pains to divulge, in a series of plays, some of which are nasty and all of which are ponderous and dull. Mrs. Fiske, at the Manhattan Theatre, New York, on October 5, 1905, produced one of those dreary compositions (a tolerably clean one), called "Hedda Gabler," and acted the principal character in it. That character, *Mrs. Tesman*, is sick. Functional derangement has

disordered her brain and destroyed her moral sense. She is vain, selfish, malicious; a thief, a liar, a traitor; she exults in cruelty and depravity; and,—figuring through a series of inexpressibly tiresome colloquies,—she closes a life of hypocrisy and guilt by the crime of suicide. A nastier little female reptile has not been depicted, even by Ibsen,—“whose spirits toil in frame of villanies,” and whose whole fabric of dramatic writing is a pollution to the Stage, a wearisome burden upon contemporary thought, a darkness to the eyes of hope, and a blight to everything that it can touch of nobility, beauty, and joy. Perhaps such persons as *Hedda Gabler* exist: the Lunatic Asylum is the place for them; not the Theatre. Mrs. Fiske presented that ailing and eccentric female in a manner to awaken solicitude, and with an elocution irresistibly suggestive of an additional “b” in the middle of her surname. Early in the depressing services it became obvious that *Hedda* had made a mistake in marrying *Professor Tès-man* and that the society of that respectable scientific ass had become almost intolerable to her. Later it was observed that she became experimental and analytic, and that she wanted, in particular, to diversify existence by making mischief. To this end she insulted her husband’s aunt; flirted with the tax man; badgered a fugacious female who had sought her help and protection; tempted a former sweetheart of her own to get drunk and go to ruin; stole that lover’s precious manu-

script and put it in the fire; goaded him to desperation by her ironical taunts, and armed him with a pistol with which to shoot himself: and, finally, when no more deviltry seemed to be feasible, played a piano and shot herself. All this from mere wanton jealousy that anybody else should be happy!

The play of "Hedda Gabler" is a long-winded, colloquial exposition of disease, and its heroine is an insane cat. No other phrase can as well describe such a monstrous union of vanity and depravity. Some excellent acting was done in the presentment of this vicious and depressing picture of dulness and morbid, mad-house wickedness. Mrs. Fiske, indeed, considerably exaggerated her icy, piercing, stridulous, staccato speech, but she has the talent of sarcasm, and can say heartless words in a way to bite the sense of hearing and almost to sting the heart. Her performance was remarkably effective,—being mordant with sarcasm, keen with irony, dreadful with suggestion of watchful wickedness, and bright with vicious eccentricity. Not long before her first production of "Hedda Gabler" Mrs. Fiske, in writing about Henrik Ibsen, condemned that author, in terms no less trenchant than true,—declaring, in a New York magazine, that Ibsen "by his example as well as by his work, has almost *banished beauty, nobility, picturesqueness, and poetry from the Stage,*" and that "some of us must believe that *his influence on the whole of the contemporary drama has been baneful.*" That

being the fact, and that fact being recognized by the actress, it seemed a little singular that Mrs. Fiske should contribute to a possible extension of a "baneful" influence by producing and acting in Ibsen's plays. But it is lovely woman's inalienable right to be inconsistent. Her exploit, however, in producing Ibsen's plays has amply substantiated her condemnation of them. There is, surely, enough good in human nature, enough romance in human experience, enough beauty in the natural world, whereon to base a drama of loveliness and light: and, surely, it is neither unreasonable nor unkind to hold that a woman of genius, like Mrs. Fiske, has no need to stoop to the baneful drama of feculence, prolixity, depression, and disease,—the drama that banishes poetry, beauty, and nobility from the Stage, the drama of crack-brained pessimists or charlatans, made of "all that is at enmity with joy."

"ROSMERSHOLM."

It was Mme. Modjeska who introduced the Ibsen drama to the American Stage, she having brought out "The Doll's House," under the name of "Helma," at one of the provincial theatres in 1883, but Mrs. Fiske has done more than any other performer to make the Ibsen drama temporarily current and to invest it with at least an appearance of stability,—her exceptional intellectual force, power of will, originality of character, and steadfast persistence having enabled her to

excel competition in the display of Ibsen's erratic heroines. Her impersonation of *Rebecca West*, in "Rosmersholm," which was shown at the Lyric Theatre, on December 30, 1907, manifested the same resolute personality, morbid temperament, and perverse obliquity of conduct that she had previously revealed in *Hedda Gabler*.

Ibsen probably intended that "Rosmersholm" should convey a meaning, but, if so, his intention was not fulfilled. The translator of the play intimated the opinion that it is a picture of antagonism of political parties in the kingdom of Sweden and Norway, that one of its characters, a schoolmaster named *Kroll*, typifies the bitterness of defeated conservatism, while another, a sleek radical editor, typifies downy, crafty, self-seeking democracy. The more explicit press agent, on the contrary, declared it to be expositive of the love of *John Rosmer* and *Rebecca West*. Neither of those theories, nor the perusal of the piece nor the performance of it, availed to illuminate Ibsen's darker purpose. Mrs. Fiske was said to have expressed the conviction that a right understanding of this profound subject can only be acquired in about three years of study; but, since life is short and time fleeting, the alternative of the commentator must be a resort to the facts as they dimly appear on the surface.

The play of "Rosmersholm" is comprised in four acts and is written in prose. The scene is the mansion of an

ancient, respectable family named *Rosmer*,—a home situated near a small town, on the western seacoast of Norway. The colloquy is carried on by six persons, all of whom speak alike, and all speak like Ibsen,—no one of them possessing distinctiveness of verbal expression. There is not even a remote semblance of action in any of the four scenes. The purpose seems to be a presentment of a domestic situation, and that presentment is accomplished by talk. In the course of several conversations it is made known that *John Rosmer*, owner of Rosmersholm, and the last of his race, has been a clergyman, but has left the Church and become a free-thinker: also that he is a widower, and that *Rebecca West*, a young woman of “advanced ideas,” is, and for some time has been, resident in his mansion. Intimation is afforded that *Rebecca West’s* views and proceedings, as an “emancipated woman,”—superior to the restrictions commonly imposed and observed by her sex,—are attributable to “moral antecedents,” that is to say, heredity, she being the illegitimate child of a doctor named *West* and a nurse named *Samvik*. The relation in which *Rebecca West* stands toward the emancipated *Rosmer* is not precisely defined. His purpose, as stated by himself, is to awaken the democracy of his neighborhood to the task of making all the people of Norway and Sweden noble, by freeing their minds and purifying their wills,—a task, seemingly, of some magnitude. Her purpose is to capture him; and yet, when the man

proposes marriage, she declines his offer. Something is said about her having introduced into the *Rosmer* mansion a book about "the rationale of marriage, according to the advanced ideas of the day"—whatever those may be,—and presently her testimony communicates the information that she has schemed to ingratiate herself with *Rosmer* and his wife and to become an inmate of their home; that she has been, for a time, consumed with "a wild, uncontrollable desire,"—"like a storm on the sea,"—a "horrible, sense-intoxicated desire," for *Rosmer*; that she has, by either direct statement or implication, caused *Mrs. Rosmer* to believe her husband unfaithful, insinuating, indeed, that consequences of his suggested liaison with herself, ruinous to reputation, were imminent, and thus driving the miserable wife to insanity and suicide,—*Mrs. Rosmer* having "effaced herself" by jumping into a mill-race.

In brief, "Rosmersholm," as it appears to the eyes of common sense, is a long and tedious dialogue, relative to a deplorable case of domestic trouble, sequent on the weakness of a vain, feather-headed man and the selfish strength of a visionary, addle-headed woman. *Mrs. Rosmer* having miserably perished by suicide, her surviving brother, *Kroll*, is perplexed to observe that *Rosmer* and *Rebecca West* are dwelling in the *Rosmer* home, in the fullest intimacy, and, being wishful to avert a scandal, he desires and recommends that

their relation, whatever it is, shall be "legalized." *Rosmer* is not only willing but desirous to marry *Rebecca*, but *Rebecca* shies at matrimony. What does it all mean? It all means nothing; or else it means that *Rebecca's* mind is unbalanced. What else can it mean? There is, indeed, in the remarks made by *Rosmer* and by *Rebecca*, much mystic deliverance as to "perfect emancipation" and as to marching on in "freedom, side by side." "I knew no scruples," cries *Rebecca*; "I stood in awe of no human relation":—obviously, when she was plotting and lying to supplant another woman in the affection of her husband, and driving that poor creature to madness and self-murder! "Our bond has been a spiritual marriage," says *Rosmer* to *Rebecca*. "I will devote my life, and all my energies, to the creation of a true democracy in this country": "I have emancipated myself entirely, and on every side." "I was sure I could never reach you," says *Rebecca*, "till you were a free man, both in circumstances and in mind." "Morality," says *Rosmer*, "is an instinctive law among the unbelieving and the emancipated." The unenlightened *Kroll*, on the contrary, insinuates the opinion that "there is no unfathomable gulf between free thought and free love."

Beneath this perplexing set of circumstances and beneath these diverse and flatulent sentiments there appears to be a lurking suggestion that love and marriage are conditions to be ignored and avoided.

Rebecca states to *Rosmer*, "I have a past *behind* me" (it could not be anywhere else), and that she has lost her "innocence" and never can recover it; whereupon *Rosmer* states to *Rebecca* that unless she will at once jump overboard and drown herself, as his wife *Beata* did, for his sake, he cannot believe that her mind has been ennobled by his influence or recover his faith in his mission to ennoble human souls. This would seem to imply that complete "emancipation" is to be obtained only by drowning, a process which appears, indeed, to be effectual and which, obviously, is final. *Rebecca* assents to that method of exit, and *Rosmer* is so much pleased that he proposes to make the plunge in her company: "The husband shall go with his wife," he says, "as the wife with her husband." "Yes," says *Rebecca*; "but just tell me this—is it *you* who go with *me*, or is it *I* who go with *you*?" That conundrum remains unanswered. Both those eccentric persons jump into the millrace and perish, and that is the grand catastrophe of the conference.

It may be great drama: it has every appearance of being great rubbish. No one of the persons involved in its prolixity of conversation exhibits even a single interesting attribute of character. *Rosmer*, in actual life, would be an insufferable prig,—about as distinctive and piquant as a box of candles. *Kroll* would be incarnate commonplace. *Mortengore*, an editor, would be a foxy hack, mean in nature and furtive in conduct.

Bremdel,—who has nothing to do with the piece, except to make it longer,—would be a boorish, half-crazy tramp. *Mme. Heldeth* is a nonentity. As to *Rebecca West*—she may be a genius; she seems to be a crank. Mrs. Fiske,—possessing great vitality, profound earnestness, and the art that can make nonsense glitter,—infused so much of herself into her embodiment of this lune that she impressed the mind with a sense of reality, and even, at some moments, awakened the feelings. There can be no doubt of the existence of unhappy homes and of miserable persons in them; no doubt that treacherous women, or women surcharged with “missions,” or women infatuated with men, do invade peaceful family circles and disrupt them, but it is not possible to perceive that any good can come of a description of such proceedings, in a concoction that is neither play nor treatise, that is merciless in prolixity, that shows neither facile construction nor beauty of style, that says nothing and ends nowhere.

Mrs. Fiske’s impersonation of *Rebecca West* was symmetrical, but the part did not afford to her any considerable opportunity. Her delivery of *Rebecca’s* confession of deceit and cruelty toward *Mrs. Rosmer* was spoken in a vein of intense passion. Mr. McRae, as *Rosmer*, appeared oblivious of the fact that terrible mental conflict and long-continued suffering record themselves in the countenance and demeanor. Mr. Fuller Mellish, as *Kroll*, dominated the performance

by virtue of prosaic force, or perhaps because he had more to say than anybody else, and said it with incessant vocal vigor. George Arliss, in a style reminiscent of Henry Irving, provided a striking sketch of a flamboyant, garrulous charlatan, a sort of *Alfred Jingle*, touched with the delirium of a sottish genius. The colloquies were well delivered, and all was done for the piece that zeal and taste could do: but it is a bleak, dreary, obscure composition, and one that only the enthusiasts of Ibsen could endure.

"SALVATION NELL."

The desire of Mrs. Fiske has long been evident to exercise a direct, practical, humanitarian influence in social affairs. At one time her effort was directed toward compelling compassionate treatment of cattle, when in process of transportation by railroad. At another she sent forth a pamphlet on vivisection, denouncing it as a national disgrace. In several plays,—"Little Italy," "Leah Kleschna," and "Mary of Magdala," among others,—she evinced her active sympathy with afflicted, suffering, repentant woman; woman enthralled by cruel, fateful circumstances, or degraded by weakness and passion, or soiled by sin, or in the seemingly hopeless tangle of consequences, tormented by conscience and wildly wishful for atonement and peace. The philanthropic propensity of her mind and the natural drift of her endeavor,—a drift toward the improve-

ment of social conditions,—were especially manifested in her performance of *Nell Sanders*, in the play called “Salvation Nell,” by Mr. Edward Sheldon, which she gave, for the first time, in New York at the Hackett Theatre, November 17, 1908, where it was received with much more interest and toleration than it deserved. The play, judging from its ecstasy of moral enthusiasm, seemed to have been inspired by the actress herself, for it moves in the line of her habitual thought and feeling on the subject of social abuses; but, however that may be, Mrs. Fiske animated it with the passionate fervor of her glowing human spirit, and even its temporary acceptance was mainly attributable not to its moral persuasion but to the force of the actress’s personality. As a drama it indicates a long ancestry, inclusive of “*Oliver Twist*,” “*The Ticket-of-Leave Man*,” “*It’s Never Too Late To Mend*,” “*Mary Warner*” and so forth,—not at all resembling them in fabrication or texture, for those are plays and “*Salvation Nell*” is rubbish, but being compact of ingredients of coarse humanity and low life, and feebly instinct with a moral purpose. The dramatist, following a beaten track, treated a coarse subject in an exceedingly coarse, thoroughly amateurish manner, making sufficiently faithful copies of actual scenes and suggesting charity as the highest of all virtues and the first of all duties. Justice to all is the cornerstone of the social fabric, but there is no sin that cannot be forgiven and no sinner that

cannot be redeemed; not novel propositions, though irreproachable, and not propositions of intrinsically authoritative dramatic value.

The story of the play is trite; the language of it is an attenuated tissue of silliness, slang, vulgarity, profanity, and argot. *Nell Sanders* and *Jim Platt*,—the one a drudge, the other a vagrant, both denizens of a slum in New York,—are “pals.” The man bullies the woman, and the woman, because she loves him, submits to his brutality. There is a germ of goodness in each of them. *Nell* is affronted in a bar-room and a fight ensues, in which *Jim Platt* stabs his opponent in the eyes with his fingers, so blinding and horribly injuring him. *Jim* is arrested. *Nell*, about to become a mother, is prevented, by a Salvation Army worker, from becoming an inmate of a brothel. *Jim* is sent to prison for the crime of murderous assault. *Nell* is spiritually awakened, and she becomes a member of the Salvation Army, —zealous, industrious, and exemplary. She is a mother. Eight years pass. The father of her boy comes out of prison and again seeks her society. Experience in prison has made him a worse ruffian than ever. He purposes to obtain money by stealing it, and he asks *Nell* to migrate with him—and his plunder—into the West. That she declines to do, and he is repudiated and repelled; but, after much irrelevant twaddle, the regenerating influence of love, which has redeemed the woman, eventually proves potent for the redemption

of the man, and *Nell* and *Jim* are united in religious faith and a prospect of domestic happiness.

Mrs. Fiske, whose early success, as an actress, was gained in demure, mischievous, sparkling characters, the piquant sporters of rattling light comedy, has moved through a wide range of parts, and, in particular, she has evinced copious resources of emotional energy. The part of *Nell Sanders*,—called *Salvation Nell* after she has joined the Army of Blood and Fire,—obviously makes no demand on the imagination. Mrs. Fiske's performance of it was a photographic study—as such, the best performance of her career. *Nell* is carried through a series of situations, such as are incident to vulgarity of condition and occupation and to an environment of dirt, blackguardism, vice, and crime. Provision is made (and it is entirely easy, in the concoction of slum dramas, to make that provision) for a few moments of tumultuous feeling, whether of animal rage or religious frenzy, and in all those moments Mrs. Fiske was finely impassioned and effective, her method, then as ever, commingling impetuous volubility with intensity of repressed emotion. It was, however, as a whole, a melancholy exhibition, except to those persons who like to have their minds dragged through the gutter and drenched with the slime of the brothel and, incidentally, observe a brilliant actress making a deplorable misuse of her fine faculties and great opportunity.

IX.

THE SACRED LABORS OF OLGA NETHERSOLE.

"SAPHO" AND "THE LABYRINTH."

IN the absence of positive knowledge to the contrary, or of conclusive testimony,—the "imputation and strong circumstances which lead directly to the door of truth,"—it seems fair to assume, regarding purveyors of theatrical punk, that, however mischievous their ministrations may be, their motives are honest. Mrs. Lander, who introduced "Camille" to our Stage, was one of the best of women, and her purpose, beyond a shadow of doubt, was beneficent. It is, perhaps, just to believe the same concerning Miss Olga Nethersole, but it is difficult, almost to the extent of impossibility. At times the attitude of that performer has been such as to prompt belief of a desire to identify herself, exclusively, with characters of degeneracy and plays of morbid delirium, because her repertory has been, in some respects, one as pernicious as could have been devised, even with deliberate purpose to corrupt the public mind. Miss Nethersole made her first appearance on the American Stage, at Palmer's Theatre, on October 15, 1894, in Mr. A. W. Gattie's "The Transgressor," and

she has ever since devoted herself largely to theatrical parade of transgressors, erring sisters, and episodes of vice. The principal decent plays of her repertory are "Romeo and Juliet," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and "The Termagant." She has been conspicuously identified with "Camille," "Frou-Frou," "Carmen," "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," "Magda," "The Labyrinth," and "The Enigma." The public, subjected to that flux of offensive plays, might well exclaim, with old *Lear*: "Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination!" Representative personations by Miss Nethersole were those of the trollop called *Sapho*, in a play of that name, and *Marianne*, in "The Labyrinth," by M. Paul Hervieu.

Much benevolent theatrical industry has been enlisted in the dissemination of "views" and "precepts" as to control of animal propensities and as to conduct of the amatory affairs of mankind, and many estimable dames, together with some who were more notorious than estimable, have made devout efforts in that sacred cause, largely to the edification of a grateful public and much to the emolument of those moral missionaries. In England and America the refulgent Mrs. "Pat" Campbell and the illustrious Mrs. Kendal have shown the piteous woes and the corrosive virtues of the torrid *Mrs. Tanqueray*, from whose seductive personality lessons of rectitude radiate like the spokes of a wheel.

Mrs. Leslie Carter, formerly of Chicago, has perfumed the Theatre with the pious patchouly of *Zaza*. The revered Mme. Bernhardt has diffused general information as to the blandishments of *Izeyl* and the result of their exercise. The all-fascinating Duse, assuming the everlasting French courtesan with the interminable cough, has broken the public heart and "drowned the stage with tears." Others, too numerous to mention, have wrought in the same vineyard of eleemosynary labor, and with like results, and it is not the fault of the Theatre if Society has not become fully and finally convinced that there is no difference between virtue and vice; that woman ought, naturally, to become licentious for the reason that men are naturally depraved; that strumpet and saint are interchangeable terms; that, with the exception of leather, there is nothing like "love," and that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

On February 5, 1900, at Wallack's Theatre, New York, Miss Nethersole made a new and more than usually strenuous effort in the holy work of moral illumination, imparting unto the young men of this period the salutary monition that the society of drabs ought to be avoided, and that the path of sensual vice is a downward path, leading, through torment, to the gates of hell. The novelty of that impartment was not likely to startle any male person who had ever attended a Sunday School or made even a passing acquaintance with the Book of Proverbs; but for observers

possessed of a steady stomach it was a blessed privilege to observe the zeal of Miss Nethersole, and it was a comfort to know that a woman so energetic and persistent was active in the guardianship of the public morals and had resolutely undertaken to lead the gilded and mildewed youth of America in the way that they should go. With the bewitching Mrs. Langtry, in "The Degenerates," at one end of the line, to show how good a thing it is and how becoming well for a female rake, like *Mrs. Trevelyan*, to reform herself into a virtuous wife and an exemplary mother, and with the devout Miss Nethersole, at the other end of it, to show, in the anglicized character of Daudet's *Sapho*, that such a reformation is impossible, and, incidentally, to illustrate the practical wisdom of young men who know the value of bromides and cold water, the moral field can be said to have been fully occupied. We live in a great and favored age, and our Theatre, thus administered, is one of the noblest of its institutions.

It was remarked by Scott that no good sportsman shoots at crows. It is a wise rule, but sometimes it cannot rightly be observed. To speak seriously of the proceedings of those persons who bring forth such muck as "Sapho" is often necessary, because such persons, in producing such plays, procure a degradation of the Theatre. The play, indeed, is dull and stupid, but there can be no doubt as to its dirty character or its

pernicious tendency. It is not necessary to dilate on the sickly sentimentality of Daudet's novel or on the reeking compost of filth and folly that the crude and frivolous playwright, the late Clyde Fitch, dug out of it, with which to mire the Stage. The commodity of the scavenger requires no description. It is enough to say that this rigmarole of lust, sap-headed sentimentality, and putrid nonsense tells a vulgar, commonplace, tiresome story about a harlot and a fool, showing how, in a carnal way, they fascinated each other, how the fool clove to his folly, and how the harlot, having bamboozled the fool, went away with a criminal rogue, just out of prison. Into detail of the relations between those cattle specific inquiry is superfluous. Those details are always of one kind,—shameful, and ineffably trivial. The concrete theme is the one thing to be considered, and that is scarcely entitled to more than the comment of wonder that actors will assemble to illustrate such a matter, and that spectators exist who will actually pay for the sight of such a loathsome exhibition. It seems incredible. Here were contemptible persons, gross proceedings, foul suggestions, impure pictures, and, through all, a purulent stream of mawkish cant about the moral "lesson" which it was alleged could be derived from the inspection of garbage, and, unhappily, it is incontestable that many communities were found to accept, relish, and approve the fetid mixture, and that epicene enthusiasts commended its

putridity and anæmic moralists proclaimed its reformatory power and saving grace!

The question of dramatic art,—that is to say, of movement in a play and of competent execution in the acting of it,—is distinct from the question of morals; but, since morality, either positive or negative, is inherently present in everything, moral quality never permits itself to be ignored. If you break a bad egg you will ascertain its odor and you will not derive consolation from the whiteness of your tablecloth. Impurity of food is not redeemed by either luxury of accessories or excellence of service, and neither does a vile play become salutary and acceptable to decent taste because it happens to be prettily set and cleverly acted. Much specious doctrine on that subject has been promulgated, first and last, by theatrical panders, seeking gain by ministration to the baser appetites of “the fool multitude,” but the truth is that dramas of the brothel have never done good to anybody. A principal effect produced by them,—aside from gratification of a prurient public taste which is akin to the curiosity which prompts multitudes to examine details of crime and shame,—is to defile the minds of the young, who constitute a great part of the theatrical audience, with useless and harmful portrayals of “the seamy side of life,”—with the tainted suggestions of leering debauchery and the noxious vapors of impudent vice. In “moral” dramas, such as “Sapho,” that ancient didacticism, “The Les-

son," is always encountered,—and it always will be as long as there are hypocrites and dunces to prate and fools to listen. The tenet is that as long as "The Lesson" is clean the method of teaching may be as dirty as you please. The sophistry of that tenet is transparent. The practical efficacy of "the terrible example" has never been demonstrated. On the contrary, "the terrible example" has many times been proved to be an impulse to vice and crime, and not a deterrent from them. The advocacy of tainted plays,—declaring that stage portrayals of licentiousness and turpitude will tend to purge society of vice,—emanates largely from weak sisters of the male sex, or of no sex at all, emasculated puppies, suckling collegians and the like, trying to cut the eye-teeth of knowledge on the coral of irresponsible newspaper criticism. There is no surer sign of mental and moral obliquity than a taste for decadent literature and art. No writer of sound judgment endeavors to exploit such stuff in the Theatre: it would be as rational for him to invite public attendance in a charnel house. The objections to tainted plays are that they are obnoxious to good breeding and good taste; that their tendency is to cause mental, and sometimes physical, nausea; that they improperly handle foul themes and, obtruding them on the public mind in false aspects, soil, at the sources, the springs of thought, feeling, and conduct. "The power of beauty," says *Hamlet*, "will sooner transform honesty from what it is

to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness." The misrepresentative theatrical portrayal of sexual vice will sooner blunt, deject, and vitiate purity of mind and pervert rectitude of principle than it will create an impulse to clean living.

There are two situations in the play of "Sapho" in which the fool evinces a disposition to part from the harlot,—first because of his suddenly acquired knowledge of her infamous past life, next because he has grown tired of her: in both those situations she grovels before him, in frenzied supplication that he will not leave her. At those points Miss Nethersole was duly spasmodic, in her usual vein, but being of an unsympathetic temperament, and as an actress always artificial, she prevailed, in as far as she prevailed at all, by physical force, not by either well simulated feeling or fine art. In her level speaking the actress was hard, dry, monotonous, and frequently tame, but in moments of excitement she created a disturbance which passed for emotion: that sort of turbulence and seeming abandonment often creates, for casual observers, the effect of illusion. Miss Nethersole's presentment of "Sapho," at Wallack's Theatre, was stopped by order of the police on March 5, on the ground of immorality and injury of public decency. The charge was denied; the case was taken into court; Miss Nethersole was acquitted, and the play was revived, at Wallack's, April 7.

"THE LABYRINTH."

The New York advent of Miss Nethersole in "The Labyrinth" occurred at the Herald Square Theatre, on November 27, 1905, and, as usual, her coming made known an accession of trouble at the dwelling of the Widow Jones,—the emotional disturbance being of a character to diffuse not merely a mist, but a dense fog of woe. Poor Matilda Heron, a wonderful actress in her lawless, wild way,—who followed in Mrs. Lander's path, playing the *Camilles*, *Medeas*, and *Phædras*, and who always meant well,—customarily clamored for "the woman who is *lost*." "Only give me *that*," cried Matilda, "and I ask for no more!" The same tender longing seems to have agitated the bosom of Miss Nethersole, and that performer exhibited much facility in finding "lost" women to impersonate.

The afflicted Widow Jones, in "The Labyrinth," is named *Marianne*—which somehow sounds better than the English Mary Ann. *Marianne* got married, gave birth to a boy, and, for a time, dwelt in bliss; but only for a time. The French husband, it appears, is a gay being, and like unto the butterfly he flits from flower to flower. *Marianne's* husband was gay. He flitted. And that volatile behavior on the part of her spouse so displeased *Marianne* that presently she obtained a divorce from him, and married another man,—consenting, meanwhile, that the boy, dear relic of *Number One*,

should periodically abide with his sire. Time passed,—according to its custom,—and *Marianne* dwelt in bliss with *Number Two*, but only for a time. Then the child fell sick of the infectious and perilous disease of diphtheria and *Marianne* and *Number One* were brought together at his crib. Then—“Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa’s day!” . . . There are, manifestly, occasions when even chloride of lime and tincture of the perchloride of iron are powerless to stay the course of “Love.” This consideration, though, seems to have had no weight with *Number Two*,—even when it was sustained by the opinion of a maternal relative, opposed, on religious principle, to the expedient of divorce,—and, after *Marianne* had told her little tale of woe, *Number One* and *Number Two* were slain by each other (going out behind the house and tumbling over a convenient precipice) and their double-barrelled widow was left in frenzy. The boy recovered,—Dr. Bolus being on hand, presumably with antitoxin.

The “labyrinth,” perhaps, was the maze in which the sense of decency got lost when this farrago of a play was written: for the piece provides one of those aromatic themes to which *Othello’s* comprehensive remark is eminently pertinent: “Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks!” The public was instructed, all the same, that M. Hervieu’s drama abounds in “lessons”—one of them being the complete irrationality of the Roman Catholic Church dogma “Once married, always

married." But the truly practical "lesson" deducible from it was the axiom that cleanliness, on the Stage, might now and then be advantageously stimulated by a vigorous use of a fire hose. Plays such as *Miss Nethersole* has customarily produced would always be benefited by that treatment. That actress, as *Marianne*, comported herself in her customary manner,—as made familiar in "*Carmen*," "*Sapho*," and kindred carnalisms,—that is to say, with convulsions, shudderings, gurgitations, bleatings, and such other denotements of "genius" as are usual with performers of the hysterical order. Delirium, of course, is consummate acting. Persons who go to pieces and hammer on things are, obviously, full of heart, and heart is nature, and tears are real, and so are red noses. "I will roar," says *Bottom*, "that I will do any man's heart good to hear me." And that is not altogether a bad method for public performers to adopt who wish to communicate the old "*Festus*" dictum:

"The might and truth of hearts is never shown
But in loving those whom we ought not to love,
Or cannot have."

The situations in "*The Labyrinth*" are forced, but the forcing is expertly done, and there is enough in the play about children and the domestic affections to gloss over its rank obfuscation of principle and melt the waxen hearts of a sentimental auditory. In calm demeanor and in level speech the acting of *Miss Nether-*

sole is sometimes finely effective: it would be wholly so, but for a certain coarseness of physical quality and a commonness of tone which perhaps may be correctly designated as animal and plebeian. During the first half of that representation of "The Labyrinth" Miss Nether-sole's performance was artificial to the extent of deadly insincerity. Nothing could be worse than was her endeavor to express maternal feeling. In the denotement of a much lower form of emotion—in the wife's surrender to her repentant first husband (an extremely contemptible person, whose conduct, however, was perhaps not more dishonorable than that which is frequently caused by the much admired infatuation of love),—she was more successful; in fact, quite actual.

This actress, an expert advertiser, bulged into print with the statement that "The Labyrinth" is "a great moral drama," and expressed herself as being "amazed and shocked at the action" of certain ladies of Montreal in withdrawing their patronage from a charitable performance of "The Labyrinth" because of its immorality, adding her conviction that the mantle of charity should "have covered anything sinful the good women thought they saw." How nice! The old, old story. A drama that dumps a load of garbage on the Stage and, incidentally, mentions that garbage is a noxious product is "moral." That is folly or humbug; in either case it is bosh. The "question" raised in this play, that of divorce, is not suitable for stage presentment, except

as an incidental expedient to a drama. The "question" of morality of conduct under social conventions which establish and recognize divorce does not admit of debate—is not a "question" at all. The Theatre, moreover, is not a place to debate "questions." The moral influence of the Stage is incidental, for morality is an intrinsic and ever present attribute of art, entirely competent to take care of itself, and it should be always implicit.

The assumption of Miss Nethersole in undertaking moral preachments in the Theatre was an intolerable impudence. Who has authorized or asked the people of the Stage to instruct the public in "morality"? The attitude of the whole tribe of self-proclaimed theatrical "teachers" is insolent. The "Camille-Tanqueray-Sapho-Easiest-Way-Narrow-Path" Drama is a public nuisance and a crying shame. What good have such plays done? Whose morals have been protected or renovated by them? Who finds the portrayal and contemplation of such subjects as those plays obtrude beneficial? "What," asks Reason, "is the cause of all this theatrical anxiety about the morals of other persons?" And Echo gently answers, "The cause is greed of publicity and gain." *Camille, Izeyl, Cléopâtre, Mrs. Tanqueray, Madga, Mrs. Trevelyan, Carmen, Sapho*, and their sisters—what a galaxy! And to that gallery of charming figures Miss Nethersole, with a lofty ideal of womanhood and the mission of an artist which ought to settle, for all time,

her place in public esteem, contributed, as *Marianne*, a portrayal of a doting mother who is a wife, worn by the dreadful trial of caring for an idolized child in the death grip of an agonizing, loathsome disease, protesting, but yielding to the passionate solicitation of her divorced first husband—only, afterward, to lose herself in frenzied speculation as to whether her crime consisted in marrying her second husband or in reverting to his predecessor! At about the time when this winning picture of feminine perplexity was placed on exhibition, and I had, in the course of my professional labor in the Theatre, been required to inspect and mention a wide variety of fundamentally kindred ladies of sentimental woe, in theatrical settings ranging from tragedy to farce with music, I wrote the following lines which, perhaps, epitomize the thoughts prompted by that labor:

“MORAL” PLAYS.

Haste to the Play, dear children, haste to see
How chaste and sweet a Cyprian drab can be!
She that for many a moon has gone astray,
Finding new loves—and lovers—each new day,
In wanton revelry content to reign,
With fools—and dollars—dangling on her chain;
If touched, at length, by sacred passion’s fire,
At once she mingles with th’ angelic choir,
At once in psalm and orison unites,
And shines, a seraph, through her silken tights;
Pure, modest, tender, delicate, refined,—
To make a heaven of bliss for all mankind!



From Photographs by Byron.

HAMILTON REVELLE OLGA NETHERSOLE

as

Jean Gaussin, .

in "Sapho."



In the Collection of the Author.

MRS. CARTER

as

Adrea, in "Adrea."

X.

MRS. LESLIE CARTER.

IN "DU BARRY" AND "ADREA."

THE story of the life of Mrs. Leslie Carter will, doubtless, be told in detail in some future chapter of theatrical biography. She has filled a conspicuous position in the Theatre of To-day. In this book it is essential only to record a few informative facts. She was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on June 10, 1864(?). Her maiden name was Caroline Louise Dudley. In 1880 she became the wife of Mr. Leslie Carter, of Chicago, and in 1889 her husband obtained a divorce from her. On November 10, 1890, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, she made her first appearance on the stage, acting *Kate Graydon*, in a play called "The Ugly Duckling," which speedily perished. On July 13, 1906, she was married to Mr. William Louis Payne. Her success as an actress has been considerable, and it has been largely due to the tuition and fostering care of David Belasco, under whose management she acted until her marriage to Mr. Payne. Mrs. Carter has played about a dozen parts. Her principal performances were *Zaza*, *Du Barry*, and *Adrea*.

"DU BARRY."

When Mr. Belasco had established Mrs. Carter as a successful "star," it pleased him to select for public illustration in a drama one of the most depraved and dissolute feminine characters that hang upon the fringes of history,—the nameless hussy who, about one hundred and forty years ago, was picked out of the streets of Paris, and under the auspices of the most notorious titled blackguard of his time wedded to a complaisant degenerate, in order that she might succeed Mme. Pompadour as the mistress of King Louis the Fifteenth of France. That courtesan, Marie Jeanne, ennobled as the Countess du Barry (1746-1793),—potent in life by reason of her personal charms and flagrant debauchery, but not otherwise notable among women,—was, in Mr. Belasco's transfiguration of her, embodied,—first in Washington; then, December 25, 1901, at the Criterion Theatre, New York; subsequently far and wide throughout America,—by Mrs. Carter. A precious privilege, obviously, was thus afforded for the public to exalt itself by gazing on such an actress in such a part. The play, which is radically fanciful, uses historic names, but is not, in any sense, history. As in precedent cases so in this one, authentic records were ignored and an arbitrary, gilt-edged, rosy ideal took the place of truth. *Nell Gwynn*, in the person of Miss Crosman, had worn the halo, and

if *Nell Gwynn* could wear it, why not *Marie Jeanne*? This burnishing process, to be sure, is diffusive of vast and general misinformation, but for most persons that seems to be quite as useful as accurate knowledge, and, after all, if the Stage is to present imperial wantons in any fashion it may as well present them in a decent one. The gay *Du Barry* as seen by the dramatist was abundantly frail, but she was also fond, and while she did not scruple to pick up the royal pocket-handkerchief she nevertheless, in her woman's heart, remained true to her first love: that is the story of the play. The adventurous actual *Du Barry* became the paramour of *Cosse Brissac*, after King Louis the Fifteenth had died and after she had been exiled from the French Court. In the play the lady hides that lover in her bed (he has been wounded, and she persuades him to seek this retirement by pounding on his wounds with a heavy candlestick, until he becomes insensible), so that the jealous *King*, committing the blunder of Byron's *Don Alfonso*, in "*Don Juan*," cannot find him: she also wields the convenient candle-stick with which to smash the scone of an interloping relative who otherwise would betray him; she defies, for his sake, the gracious Majesty of France and every appurtenance thereto belonging; and, at the last, she goes pathetically to the guillotine, still loving him and still deploring her innocent, youthful past, when they were happy lovers together, when

all was peace, joy, and hope,—because, as the poet Rogers prettily phrases it, “Life was new, and the heart promised what the fancy drew.” As a matter of fact, the amiable countrymen of Du Barry sent her to the guillotine, in the winter of 1793, because they had ascertained that she was too rich to be a patriot and also, probably, had entered on a secret correspondence with their enemies in England.

As an epigraph to his play the dramatist selected a remark by Oliver Wendell Holmes, that “not the great historical events but the personal incidents that call up single sharp pictures of some human being in its pang or struggle reach us more nearly.” That statement sounds well, but it labors under the disadvantage of not being true. The play, however, exemplifies it to the extent of showing its heroine chiefly in her “pang”—a condition which, seemingly, ensues upon her being a feather-brained fool, but which she loquaciously ascribes to Fate and a ruthless appetite for “pretty things.” There is some lightness at the start, when *Jeanne* is a milliner, but the opening act proves to be practically needless, since the play does not actually begin till after the second curtain has been raised. Then the volatile girl is tempted by the offer of the *King’s* love, and in order that she may accept it her honest lover is made to misunderstand her, in an incredible manner, such as is possible only on the stage. In the Third Act she has become a great personage, almost a queen, and

that act, which is interesting, various, and dramatic, terminates with a highly effective scene, possible in a play, but impossible in life,—when *Du Barry's* wounded lover, falling insensible on that lady's bed and being carelessly covered with drapery, remains there, sufficiently visible to a crowd of eager and suspicious pursuers who are searching for him—but do not find him. The rest of the piece shows the *King's* efforts to capture the fugitive and *Du Barry's* schemes and pleadings to save him. Mrs. Carter, adept in coquetry, displayed her abundant physical fascination, but if she had refrained from removing her shoes and showing her feet, at brief intervals during the performance, she would have been considerably more pleasing in even that easy vein of bewitchment:—they were not even pretty feet. In serious business the method of Mrs. Carter as *Du Barry* was to work herself into a state of violent excitement, to weep, vociferate, shriek, rant, become hoarse with passion, and finally to flop and beat the floor. That method has many votaries and by them is thought to be “acting” and is much admired, but to judicious observers it is merely the facile expedient of transparent artifice and the ready resource of a febrile, unstable nature. An actor who loses self-control can never truly control an audience. There were, nevertheless, executive force and skill in Mrs. Carter's performance, after it had been often repeated under the guiding control of her sagacious and able manager.

"ADREA."

"Adrea," a tragedy by David Belasco and John Luther Long, was produced at the Belasco Theatre on January 11, 1905. It is a composition of exceptional imaginative scope and of great dramatic power. Its scene is a royal court of a conjectural kingdom, situated on an imaginary island in, perhaps, the Adriatic Sea. Its time is named as about the fifth century of the Christian era,—a time well chosen for poetic and romantic purposes; for the vast Roman Empire had then become extinguished in Western Europe and was slowly crumbling to pieces in the East, and minor monarchies can credibly be supposed to have flourished in such an era of transition, and a martial chieftain out of Noricum to have dallied with the daughters of a Roman Prince. It is a play without historic basis; an authentic creation of the inventive brain; a vigorous and splendid work of art, moving freely in a broad field. Its chief persons are monarchs and warriors. It deals with great themes,—great passions, crimes, and sorrows; great and terrible punishments of sin; and the spectacle of great character made sublime by grief. Much of its movement proceeds in the open air: some of it beneath the vault of night; and its web involves the terrors of tempest and the mystery and dread of spectres from the realm of death. The form and color of it are modern,—a form and color of

rosy amplitude and voluptuous luxuriance; but the feeling that pervades it is the ominous feeling of the old Greek tragedies of fate and doom. Its defect is excess—an excess of persons, objects, pictures, emotions, and words; the superflux that proceeds from intensely passionate feeling in the conception of the story, and especially in the conception and development of its central character. An affluence of fancy is, however, more grateful than the frigid sense of want.

No student of Roman history needs to be told that among the women of Rome (and at one time all Italy was circumscribed within the capital) there were females illustrious for almost celestial virtues and females portentous for the monstrosity of their hideous crimes. The authors of “*Adrea*” have neither distorted nature nor exaggerated fact in their portraiture of the two princesses, *Adrea* and *Julia*, who are opposed and contrasted in this remarkable drama of love, crime, frenzy, retribution, atonement, and peace. *Adrea* is not nobler or more virtuous than Valentinian’s *Eudoxia*, nor is *Julia* more malignant, treacherous, and cruel than Justinian’s *Theodora*. In the delineation of *Adrea* the purpose, obviously, was to present, amid regal accessories and in all the paraphernalia of semi-barbaric splendor, a woman of lofty mind, potent character, and impetuous passions, and, by making her the victim not alone of blighted affection, but of deadly outrage, to involve her in a complex tangle of torment; to make her terrible,

in the delirium of exasperated feeling; to display her emotional perturbation and fierce and ferocious conduct, in a vortex of tempestuous struggle; and, finally, to depict her noble expiatory conquest of herself, and to leave her, in her lonely majesty, a sublime image of triumphant virtue, gentle fortitude, and patient grief. That purpose has been superbly accomplished. To superficial observers, indeed, the delineation of *Adrea* appeals chiefly by reason of its implication of theatrical situation, its startling effects of climax, and its gorgeous scenic investiture. To thoughtful minds it comes home as an illuminative and significant exposition of human nature, artfully made through the medium of a wonderful picture of human life in the antique world: and in this it reaches much further than to the fulfilment of an immediate theatrical need. Like the more classic dramatists of the Garrick era, its authors have drawn their inspiration from the great fountain of historic antiquity—adjusting, rearranging, and emphasizing old types and old examples, to exhibit actually, and not by any dubious method of old symbolism, what is in our own hearts and of what fibre we all are made. Their play is an honor to them, and it is a rich and permanent addition to the literature of the Stage—by which is meant not things that are made to be read, but things that are made to be acted.

Mrs. Carter impersonated *Adrea*, and, having found a part in which she could entirely liberate all her emo-

tional power, without losing control of it, she rose to the occasion. She had thitherto acted in comedy or sentimental drama. The character of *Adrea* is tragic. That princess, deserted by her idolized lover, has become blind. Later she is, by this physical calamity, deprived of her royal inheritance, and then, through the odious strategy of her criminal sister, she is delivered into the lewd embraces of an ignominious menial. Exposure to an electrical tempest at once restores her vision and destroys this enforced and shameful bondage, so that she can occupy her throne and,—should he be placable,—redeem and reinstate her lover. In this auspicious moment, through access of pride and perversity of passion, she is defied and insulted by the man whom she loves, and, in a paroxysm of fury, she condemns him to be lashed through her streets and trampled by her horses. A calmer mood succeeds, for both *Queen* and warrior, and they speak together again, almost as lovers: but the *Queen* is powerless to rescue her subject from his doom, and, in order to save him from a death of shame, she strikes him dead. In the sequel, after years of fatal remembrance, she invites the black eclipse, disablement and misery of blindness and delivers her kingdom to the rule of her slaughtered lover's son. Through the wide range of conflicting emotions implicated in this experience Mrs. Carter moved firmly, steadily, triumphantly,—commanding every situation and rising to every climax. No denotement in Mrs.

Carter's acting of *Du Barry* had even remotely indicated such depth of tragical feeling and such power of dramatic expression as she revealed in the scene of the tempest, in pronouncing *Kaeso's* doom, and, above all, in the terrible, piteous, tragic self-conflict through which the Woman became the incarnation of Fate and the minister of death. Mrs. Carter had long been known for her exceptional facility of feminine blandishment, her absolute command of the enticing wiles of coquetry and the soft allurements of sensuous grace,—known, likewise, and rightly admired for the clarity and purity of her English speech, always delightful to hear: but observers studious to see and willing to be convinced had not supposed her to be an actor of tragedy. It took a long time for Mrs. Carter to gain a really great victory, but she gained it in *Adrea*. The impersonation possessed many attributes of beauty: symmetry, for the eye; melody, for the ear; unity, continuity, and sustainment, for the critical sense; personal fascination, for the physical consciousness; poetic atmosphere, for the imagination; and sincerity of emotion, for the heart: but, it possessed one supreme attribute of terror, absolute knowledge of human misery. "Look into your heart, and write" is an old poetic precept. "Look into your heart, and act" ought to be joined with it: but, God pity the heart into which the true poet and the true actor must sometimes look!

XI.

LEAVES FROM MY JOURNAL:

"ZAZA, SAPHO & CO.—UNLIMITED."

November 11, 1900:—The moral ministrations of Mrs. Leslie Carter, in the character of *Zaza*, which, with the apostolic sanction of Mr. Charles Frohman, have for some time edified, blessed, and ennobled the community, at the Criterion Theatre, have been concluded, and that exemplary toiler in the vineyard of virtue will now operate elsewhere, extending the sphere of her beneficence and refreshing other sandy wastes of sin with those dews of righteousness and "lessons" of rectitude for which she is so signally renowned. Her labors here have abundantly resulted in fruits, and other delicacies, meet for repentance, and the crowded ranks of her grateful proselytes cannot behold without a pang the deep disaster of her going off. The heart will occasionally break, under such harrowing circumstances of bereavement and deprivation, and yet, as the poet Byron noticed, it will brokenly live on. A martyred public, however, need not sorrow as those without hope, for Mrs. Carter is coming back, and coming not only with the morally fecund *Zaza*, but with a character

still more fumiferous, from the same ignopotent Belasco pen; and, meantime,—to soothe all sorrows and to dry all tears,—as golden Carter lessens in the West, the Orient blazes with refulgent Nethersole. In the absence of *Zaza* there is comfort in a knowledge that seekers after truth and lovers of virtue can repair to Wallack's Theatre and sit at the number nine English feet of *Sapho*:

“Sweet Harmonist! and beautiful as sweet!
And young as beautiful! and soft as young!
And gay as soft! and innocent as gay!”

Nethersole, to be sure, is a proselyte of Carter, and not quite the genuine article of moral suasion, and it is probably true,—as a listening world has heard from Mme. Réjane, who surely ought to know,—that *Sapho* is innocent milk alongside of the strong wine of *Zaza*. But the imitation is potent: it fluttered even the Volsces of the District Attorney, last April: if Nethersole as *Sapho* cannot precipitate herself upon the contiguous furniture with quite the reckless abandonment and athletic anguish of Carter as *Zaza*, she can plunge at the carpet with a violence that causes acute agony, she can smash bric-à-brac with a remarkably free hand, she can rend the firmament with raucous sounds, and, as to the hysterics of amatory stationery, in that sweet episode of the love letters she can readily excel competition: and, after all, and notwithstanding Mme. Réjane, that

singularly chaste and illuminative spiral staircase business with the impassioned *Sapho* is almost as full of salutary significance for ingenuous minds, and almost as stimulative of the nobler propensities of humanity, as the delicate dressing-room scene with the loving *Zaza*, in which that other artless child of nature refreshes her half-naked person with powder and perfumery, and coos and purrs around her reluctant lover in what is, no doubt, intended as the true spirit of the Sunday School. *Sapho* may be the lacteal fluid of morality as compared with *Zaza*, but its milk, if milk it be, is, at least, that of goats: and this is a form of theatrical nourishment that must not be undervalued or disparaged. If Chaucer's apple-tree can grow, and become a standard test of decency, under the approving smile and fructifying sunshine of the Supreme Court, why not *Sapho*?

This being understood, and these things being in order, the mourners for the absent *Zaza* should be consoled by the present *Sapho*. And what a comfort it is to consider that Carter and Nethersole are both extant in the same period, and both engaged in the same holy work! Much as the community has been elevated by a contemplation of those heroines of reformation, it probably has not yet entirely comprehended the nature and extent of its obligation to them. They have broken many fetters; they have illumined many dark places; they have swept away many delusions; and, in particular,

they have dissipated the fallacious notion that the Theatre should be the home of beauty, poetry, and art; that the Drama should be a repository of noble thought, romantic imagery, and pure influence; that acting should show its spectators an ideal to be emulated,—in character, life, and manners,—making them happier than they were before seeing it, and leaving their hearts uplifted and their minds refreshed. That was an old belief; but, with other old beliefs,—with foolish ideas about love, purity, self-sacrifice, the fireside of home, and the sanctity of the altar of God,—it must now be cast aside. Old-fashioned, stupid views about the Stage have had their day, and it is time they were discarded. The true province of the Modern Theatre is to place within the public reach the precious privilege of observing the blandishments and the tribulations of courtesans and hussies, the riff-raff of female vanity, folly, and sensuality; of studying the means employed by those beatific persons to fascinate fools and to obtain music-hall engagements; and, incidentally, of inspecting the brothel side of metropolitan life, learning how homes are disrupted, characters degraded, careers ruined, and hearts broken, and of imbibing, at last, a settled disgust for human nature, such as is well calculated to turn the kindest soul to bitter cynicism, shatter the foundations of religious faith, and cover everything in the world with a pall of satiety and despair.

That is the logical inference obviously deducible from

much that has been exhibited on the stage within a recent period,—and not only exhibited on the stage, but rapturously accepted by a multitude of the public. It may not be amiss, accordingly, to indicate that the toils, achievements, and renown of those players, alike in England and America, who are engaged in this great business of thus widening the popular vision and supervising the popular morals (a class well represented by Carter and Nethersole, with “Zaza” and “Sapho,” plays which are shockingly pernicious in their influence, and not less so because tagged with the sickening putridity of “moral lessons,” plays that have been, and customarily are, shown and acted in a shockingly indelicate and offensive manner) are, at least, beginning to be understood, and that they ought to be more widely and more particularly appreciated.

XII.

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL IN SEVERAL PLAYS.

"MAGDA."

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL, an English actress of considerable repute in London, appeared at the Republic Theatre, New York, on January 13, 1902, acting the chief part in Sudermann's play of "Magda,"—named in the original "Heimat." That play illustrates two propositions: that it is prudent for a young woman to become a wife before she becomes a mother, and that parents should not exercise irrational tyranny in the management of their children. It ought not to require much "pen and ink," as *Rip Van Winkle* calls it, to formulate those truisms, but Sudermann has spread his thin treacle of platitude over a broad surface, so that his "Madga,"—despite the fact that it contains two interviews and colloquies that are well constructed and effective,—is tediously commonplace. The story is indelicate, and chiefly for that reason it has attracted considerable notice. The character of *Magda* typifies "the new woman,"—that is to say, the woman who proposes to take an independent course in all things, and, as far as possible, to act as if she were a lawless

man,—and that fact has helped to invest the play with a certain and very mischievous allurements for many women. In London all such plays as “*Magda*” are, and long have been, viewed with special favor by a sickly class of fantastic triflers and degenerates, known, among themselves, as “the souls.” In America they are congenial to an increasing class of similar cranks.

Analysis of the character of *Magda*,—made in the first volume of this work, but pertinent here and therefore here summarized,—discovers that this young woman represents conceit, perversity, mulish self-will, bad temper, an ill-balanced mind, unprincipled conduct, the self-indulgence of a capricious voluptuary, and the spirit of revolt against all restraints, whether of convention, duty, or common sense. She is vain, selfish, ill-bred, eager for admiration, and intent, in a thoroughly pig-headed fashion, on having her own way, without regard to either cost or consequence. She incarnates egotism, and in actual life she would be insufferable,—making trouble for herself and for everybody around her. She rebels against an austere father; leaves her home; suffers seduction and abandonment; gives birth to an illegitimate child,—thereby imparting to another wretched being the burden of her own folly, weakness, and sin,—attains theatrical distinction—that colossal crown of greatness!—and then she returns to her father’s house (a proceeding as need-

less as it is foolish and incredible), to find that her licentious betrayer is her father's intimate friend, to wither him with her scorn for his belated advances, while thanking him for having emancipated her spirit through the blessing of maternity, and to shock her choleric old sire into a fatal apoplexy by the ill-tempered, wanton, coarse innuendo that she has been leading a life of sexual degradation and shame. It would not be easy to imagine a more repellent type of everything that is unlovely in female nature and grossly and wantonly wayward in female conduct.

The purpose, in presenting this type of headstrong womanhood, manifestly was to construct such situations as are naturally sequent upon amorous intrigue. Those situations are strained, but that of the prosperous prodigal *Magda's* return to her primitive, straitlaced home is one of sharp contrast and of mischievous, piquant vivacity, and that of her colloquy with her despicable betrayer,—now become a speciously sanctimonious hypocrite,—is replete with the force of mordant contempt and satirical bitterness, while that of the interview between *Magda's* father, the stern, stalwart, imperious German officer, and this whited sepulchre of vice diffuses a certain potentiality of anxious suspense. The play, however, contains no dramatic element of exceptional strength, its fibre is coarse, its atmosphere is dull, its didacticism is rudimentary, and its general impartment to the spectator is that of annoyance and

distress. *Magda* was first revealed on the American Stage in 1884 by Helena Modjeska, who made her a woman of genius, and, by investing the character with undue mental superiority and refinement, rendered its meaning inapplicable to the average of women: and this is a play that must justify its existence on ethical grounds, if that existence is to be justified at all. The part was, afterward, conspicuously acted by Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanora Duse, and Minnie Maddern Fiske,—the latter actress giving the truest and therefore the best performance of it ever seen.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell brought to *Magda* the advantages of personal beauty, of a peculiar type, and the facility of experience. Tall, lithe, slender, alert in movement, nervous, restless, impetuous, possessed of an expressive countenance and of a peculiar voice, singular rather than sympathetic; clever in posing, and proficient in sudden swirls of vehement motion and fervent loquacity, that actress imparted the impression of a distinctive, energetic, potent character. Excessive sensibility was the predominant attribute of her acting, and that was combined with a strange self-absorption, as of a mind in which fancy exceeds reason and volition is governed by impulse. In the single gay scene of the drama, that of *Magda's* arrival in her father's house, there was abundant expression of physical exuberance and reckless hilarity, but there was neither sweetness nor humor. Mrs. Campbell was essentially a serious

actress in a bizarre, fantastic, and more or less distraught vein. Her expression of scorn and contempt, in *Magda's* interview with the licentious charlatan, *Keller*; her utterance of sarcasm, in the bitter, icy, mordant mockery of him; her proud exultation, in defeating, repelling, and degrading him, and her impassioned volubility in declaiming about woman's advancement under the sharp discipline of sin and sorrow revealed her powers at their best, showing her to be a competent performer, in that intense, spasmodic school which, both in America and England, has, of late years, attained to such a considerable prominence—since drawing-room walls began to be stuccoed with dinner plates and “poetical” literature to be peopled with “blessèd damosels.” In those passionate speeches to *Keller* (which, intrinsically, are fustian) she manifested more power of design than of execution, but enough of fervor to create an illusion of sincerity.

The Stage is never less attractive than when it deviates into ethical analysis and exposition, and undertakes to diffuse regulative admonitions as to public morals. Such a play as “*Magda*” may be needed in Germany; it is not needed in America.

“BEYOND HUMAN POWER.”

If Mrs. Patrick Campbell were either a great actress or a great woman,—that is to say, if the denotements of her acting or those of her personality were such as

to elevate the beholder with a sense of superlative ability or superlative natural gifts,—there might be a reason for resigned acceptance of her sedulous presentation of noxious, or dismal, or crazy plays. Greatness palliates defects. The reader of Swift, for example, is willing to endure the distressful misanthropy of that great writer, in consideration of his wonderful genius. But Mrs. Campbell is neither exceptional as an actress nor extraordinary as a woman. Her professional equipment, gained in many years of experience, is, indeed, ample for many purposes, and she possesses the more or less winning charm of a personal oddity, but there is neither glamour in her proceedings nor magic in herself to divert attention from the excessively lugubrious, morbid, dull, and sometimes pernicious character of the dramas in which she has chosen to appear; and either to see those plays or to think of them is to suffer. On January 18, 1902, Mrs. Campbell presented a colloquy, in two parts, called "Beyond Human Power," written by Björnstjerne Björnson, and therein she impersonated a bed-ridden female, afflicted with partial paralysis. Björnson was a writer of ability, but one bent on being singular at any and every cost, and his literary fabric, "Beyond Human Power," is nothing more than a ponderous, tedious, pointless, futile essay on Christianity and "Christian Science"; a picture and a dialogue, freighted with the disclosure (which he seems to have considered momentous) that it is entirely beyond human

power, through the agency of prayer, to arrest the progress of a fatal disease. There may be other meanings secreted in the recesses of this intricate, prolix composition, but that is the most obvious one, and, undeniably, such an impartment is more compatible with a medical treatise or with a sermon than it is with a play. In practical effect the performance of it was a prayer-meeting, with calciums,—needing only a final doxology to make it complete.

The scene of this crazy exposition is a town of northern Norway, and the characters implicated in it consist of one bishop, seven preachers, one layman, and five women. One of the preachers purports to be a worker of miracles. That saint has healed several diseased persons, and he now proposes to heal his sick wife, an invalid, who has long been disabled, and who, for six weeks, has not been able to sleep. The cure is to be effected by prayer. The suffering wife,—who devotedly loves her husband and more than half believes in his power to work a miracle,—is sympathetic with his design and responsive to his ecstatic conviction, and so, eventually, she is moved by his hypnotic force. His son and daughter, on the contrary, from whom he has expected co-operative aid in his orisons, find themselves incapacitated by doubt, and, in this dilemma, after a wearisome and platitudinous inquiry as to the constituents of Christianity, he concludes that he must win his victory alone, and thereupon he retires into his church, to pray.

The progress of his devotion is announced by the tolling of a bell, and presently his wife falls into a trance of slumber, this repose being so complete that even the tumult caused by a noisy landslide does not break it. The landslide, it is declared, has spared the church, and this incident, coupled with that of the invalid's lapse into sleep, is accepted as a miracle, vouchsafed by Heaven in answer to the preacher's prayer. The bishop and seven parsons then assemble and, pending the expected recovery of the paralytic,—who is to rise and walk,—they indulge in a protracted debate on the possibility and nature of miracles; a debate in which many different views are enunciated, mostly in that style of loquacious, top-lofty, bumble-bee sonority to which pulpit performers are commonly addicted. This controversy, aimless, profitless, and wofully stupid, is mercifully closed by the entrance of the patient, clad in a beautiful nightgown, and perfectly possessed of her powers of locomotion. The preacher is summoned from the church. The neighbors cluster about the house. The congregation chants Hallelujah. All seems to be well. But the trance machinery has spent its force. The wife falls dead, of paralysis; the husband falls dead, of disappointment; the play falls dead, of innate absurdity; and the audience very nearly falls dead, of fatigue.

Björnson's drama,—if drama it can be called which contains only two moments of anything like action,

—has been translated into smooth and expressive English by Miss Jessie Muir, and several of its passages of narrative and description are notably pictorial and eloquent; while even in the debate on miracles there are occasional touches of pungent phraseology such as impart a momentary bliss of relief from rhapsodical folly. Perhaps there was a little agnostic mischief in the author's purpose,—a slight intention of satire,—when writing that colloquy of the ecclesiastical synod. No intelligent person believes that anything has ever happened in this world, or ever will happen, or ever can happen, that is not in absolute accordance with the laws of nature. Christianity,—the spirit embodied in the character of its Founder,—is not a mystery, nor does it depend on miracles. Diseases that exist only in the imagination can, doubtless, be alleviated or cured by an effort of the will. Cheer of mind is propitious to health of body. Twice two is four. There needs no ghost come from Norway to tell us this. The fabric is not destitute of interest as a miniature sketch of Norwegian life, and likewise it is a curiosity. But a sick woman lying in bed is out of place in a theatre, and when fanatical enthusiasm, however amiable, has turned a man into a fool he should not be presented as a type of Christian character.

The acting was marked by profound sincerity. Mrs. Campbell's elocution, in her level speaking, and until she became excited, excelled any display of intelligence

and skill which she had made, but as *Mrs. Sang* she seemed a remarkably healthful invalid, and it was pleasant to observe that even in death her beauty remained unimpaired. Mr. Titheradge, a heavy going but correct actor, manifested a temperament of uncommon benignity and sweetness, and filled, indeed, a true ideal of the bland, impracticable, deeply religious crank. A disputatious parson, with a predilection for common sense, was skilfully embodied by Mr. George Arliss, whose presence thus cast a gleam of sunshine upon a dark place.

“MARIANA.”

The play of “*Mariana*,” presented by Mrs. Campbell on January 24, 1902, at the Republic Theatre, was the first of the plays of the Spanish dramatist José Echegaray ever acted in America, and Mrs. Campbell’s interpretation of *Mariana*, its heroine, was a flutter of levity, a breeze of coquetry, and a spasm of hysterical excitement. In seeing “*Mariana*” the observer saw the wooing, and what came of it, of a sophisticated, egotistical, arrogant, selfish, intolerable young woman by a feather-brained, feverish, impetuous young man, stupidly crazed with passion. The greater part of the play is an inquiry whether *Mariana* will, or will not, accede to her lover’s solicitation, and it appears to have been expected that the spectator would view with anxious suspense the capricious perturbations of her

mind and the wayward vacillations of her conduct. At some moments she is propitious: at others her aspect is that of ominous menace. Intimations are given that she has inherited from a wicked father and a weak, sinful, unfortunate mother,—both deceased,—legacies of inherent evil,—a cynical distrust of all goodness and a propensity to be heartless and cruel. She is manifested as something refulgent, portentous, mysterious, potent, and inflammatory, causing masculine combustion at every turn. Anguish in the male bosom hails her approach and havoc attends her footsteps.

The execution done on *Mariana's* lover, *Daniel*, this being the burden of the play, is pitiful—for that unfortunate man is “distill’d almost to jelly” in her presence, and when at length she accepts his homage he becomes a pulp. That situation being arranged, the full purpose of her delineation stands revealed,—the purpose of creating a climax of hysteria and comprehensive crash. Apprised by an adroitly managed incident that her *Daniel's* disreputable father was her mother's seducer, she discards *Daniel* and weds his rival,—all this with a precipitation that amazes both of them,—to the inevitable end (as matters go, in plays of this high-pressure kind) that *Daniel* shall visit her, on her bridal night, and that both shall be slain by her ruthless, implacable husband. Thus the instructive Echegaray illustrated in what manner the completely irrational conduct of a morbid woman can diffuse misery and

cause crime,—for *Mariana* might have laid down her *Daniel* in many different ways, without even once taking up her *Pablo*, had she been minded so to do, and there would have been no resultant catastrophe. The play lacks movement and incident, and it is more notable for Ibsenism of disquisition than for dramatic vitality; but it shows keen perception of character and facile skill in the portrayal of manners. Echegaray has long been known as a clever dramatist. As a study of feminine nature “*Mariana*” is radically diseased, and as a presentment of the much abused passion of love it is a libel and a caricature. Such stuff, however, usually finds an audience: sentimentalism is a common malady; but, to the healthful mind, “*Mariana*” seems very much as “*The Lady of Lyons*” did to Artemus Ward’s disgusted Mormon elder, who “arose and walked out, with his twenty-four wives, saying that he would not sit and see a play where a man made such a cussed fuss over one woman.” It might be added—still further to employ the forcible language of this saint—that there is no special edification in seeing one woman make such a cussed fuss over herself.

Mrs. Campbell’s artistic display of female fascinations, as *Mariana*, was viewed with composure. The actress was somewhat mature for such a part, but her peculiarities suited it, and she embodied a credible ideal of a woman of many moods and caprices. The part requires nerves rather than brains. To be sun-

shine one moment and cloud the next, to blow hot and cold, to be proud, capricious, irritable, now gay and now rueful, sometimes to repress excitement and sometimes to give it a free way, and at the last to plunge headlong into delirium,—that is to be *Mariana*. Mrs. Campbell easily did this, and produced no other effect than that of extravagant theatrical artifice. There is no element of nobility or charm in the character, and there was no element of either power or beauty in the performance. There was abundance of glitter and of grace in it, associated with occasional sweet, caressing tones and momentary touches of demure mischief; and there was, toward the last, a glimmer of pathos. There was fine intelligence in the elocution,—more especially in the delivery of narrative,—and there was a fervid vitality in the impersonation, evincing the sincerity of endeavor which always wins esteem, despite the fog and folly of a crazy play.

“PÉLLEAS AND MÉLISANDE.”

A ritual service was duly said, on January 28, 1902, at the Victoria Theatre, New York, by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, over the remains of “Pélleas and Mélisande,”—two feeble-minded persons untimely dead, of inanition, at an early age,—and the solemn ceremony was viewed with becoming decorum by a numerous company of bereaved and sorrow-stricken friends. Mrs. Campbell appeared to be deeply affected—so much so

that once, in the candor of grief, she forcibly exclaimed: "I'm dreadful, like this!" and there could be no doubt that her words carried conviction to many suffering hearts. With reference to the dear deceased it was generally remembered that they had been born to troubles, verbal no less than amatory, as the sparks fly upward, and that their demise was the best thing that ever happened to them—because it at once delivered them out of dire distress. When two brothers love one and the same girl, and the girl gets married to the elder and subsequently becomes enamoured of the younger, finding him responsive, and so making her husband jealous and causing fratricide, the conditions of existence, in her family circle, are strained; and that is what had happened to *Golaud*, who was *Mélisande's* husband; to *Pélleas*, who was her innocent lover, and to *Mélisande* herself. Recalling those facts, the mourners were able to find consolation—in spite of copious incidental dirges, of a kind well calculated to produce green-apple colic.

To speak gravely, the proceedings of Mrs. Campbell and her associates, in their interpretation of M. Maeterlinck's insane drama, revealed a ghastly spectacle of imbecility. Whatsoever things are silly, absurd, and idiotic; whatsoever things are indicative of freakish folly and mental aberration,—all those things concentrate in the fantastic devices and the puerile style of M. Maeterlinck's plays. Some of them, indeed, have no

meaning whatever. In "Pélleas and Mélisande" there is a thread of story, but the thread is so slender, the story so trite, the incident so trivial, and the language assigned to the several interlocutors so insipid that, at last, the patience of even the most tolerant auditor is overwhelmed and exhausted. Disciples of the Maeterlinck Fad have, of course, proclaimed that his prodigious genius aims to instruct mankind by means of "symbols," and that each of his pictures secretes a vast and comprehensive meaning. It may be so; but, to the eye and ear of sense, taking those pictures for what they are, and hearing the twaddle with which they are accompanied, his symbols are about as rationally significant as were the vegetable marrows with which *Mrs. Nickleby's* lunatic wooer pelted that old lady, across her garden wall.

Description could give no adequate idea of the absurdity of Mrs. Campbell's behavior as *Mélisande*,—a behavior, no doubt, completely warranted by the part,—and only M. Maeterlinck's words can convey an adequate idea of the wretched bathos of which he is capable. One law of the Maeterlinck style appears to be that every platitude spoken shall be spoken twice, and, as almost every speech is a platitude, the iteration soon becomes indeed damnable. Of dramatic art in the representation there was not a trace, except for the acting of Mr. Titheradge, who once or twice succeeded in being impressive, in spite of the ridiculous

situations in which he was placed and the nonsense that he was obliged to speak. In *Golaud's* scene with a child, for example, he suggested *Leontes*, in a passage of "The Winter's Tale." Mr. Arliss, in a scene that Gilbert might have devised for *Mr. Bunthorne*, posed with a row of five old women, all dressed alike, and stated that he had "heard flies crawling on the door" but did not know why it was that he wanted to go down cellar. Perhaps it was to get some fly-paper—or, possibly, to fetch beer. Mrs. Campbell frequently said that she was "unhappy," but it was not observed that her suffering as *Mélisande* impeded her in the display of various Burne-Jones gowns or in the assumption of numerous church-window attitudes. The meaning of her impersonation was inscrutable. For the most part, the heroine appeared to be distraught—and a performer who is distraught, in a Maeterlinck play, has only to look fixedly at nothing and to bleat. Obstetrical complications were mentioned as having occurred, toward the close of the farrago; an aged *King* produced an infant, swathed in wrappings of flannel, and Mrs. Campbell died beautifully, in a beautiful bed. It was all extraordinary, serving one good purpose, however, in denoting a kind of composition and of professional conduct which should be carefully avoided—because nothing is more desirable in drama than a total rejection of freaks and fripperies, and strict allegiance to healthful standards of beauty, simplicity, and truth.

"AUNT JEANNIE."

Mrs. Campbell appeared at the Garden Theatre, New York, on September 16, 1902, in a play called "Aunt Jeannie," by Mr. E. F. Benson, giving an exposition of adroit feminine duplicity and effective blandishments, and pleasing by a clever exhibition of eccentric character and fantastic art. In the person of *Aunt Jeannie* Mrs. Campbell represented a tempting widow who temporarily tangles herself in a mesh of troubles, by flirting with her niece's betrothed lover, in order to prevent that niece's marriage with a scamp. The widow's purpose is accomplished,—but in the pursuit of it she grieves her niece and afflicts her own lover, and, for a time, she suffers the usual consequence of virtuous self-sacrifice. The play, mildly ardent in its episode of allurements, is, in the main, flabby and feeble,—the prolix recital of a sentimental love story,—probably a French novel,—and destitute of movement. The story is wildly irrational. There was no need for the widow to resort to the indelicate expedient of flirtation: her scheme is as unnecessary as it is vulgar: and there was not the slightest need of withholding her confidence from the man to whom she has plighted her troth. The motive of *Aunt Jeannie's* duplicity, however, is a virtuous one,—the deceiver, whom she dupes, befools, and exposes, having caused the miserable death of her niece's sister: so that *Aunt Jeannie*, as a character, is



From a Photograph.

In the Collection of the Author.

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL

as

Magda, in "Magda."

neither immoral nor morbid. In a remote sense the theme is analogous to that of Tennyson's "Promise of May"; but the comedy is more a study of manners than an emblematic depiction of woman's wit. Its style is dull.

In acting *Aunt Jeannie* Mrs. Campbell manifested neither depth of feeling nor power of expression, yet her acting was sincere—the easy, zealous expositure of a sensitive, feverish, nervous temperament; sometimes sparkling and graceful; often fantastic; almost always artificial with self-conscious manner, even at the highest tension of excitement. It revealed neither opulence of emotional nature nor commanding nobility of intellectual purpose. The better of its memorable attributes were professional zeal, sweetness of caressing tone, demure pleasantry, and a finely intelligent, though often indistinct, delivery. In the chief scene the usual weapons of coquetry were employed with expert proficiency. Coquetry is easy to most clever women, and they seldom refrain from amusing themselves with the practice of it. Mrs. Campbell, as an elderly siren, was effective, but neither bewitchment nor singularity makes a great actress.

"THE JOY OF LIVING."

Sudermann's concoction entitled "The Joy of Living" might, for convenience of designation, be called a play, because it contains scenes and dialogues, but,

practically, it is a sort of pictorial treatise, setting forth the evil consequences of adulterous incontinence, and moralizing thereon. Its foreign author,—like that other erratic foreigner, Ibsen,—is surcharged with “views,” the mental fermentation of which results in a sort of theatrical gas, and that is occasionally liberated from the stage by performers of the *Bunthorne* breed, who can attract attention only by means of odd devices and bizarre expedients, the writings of cranks and the antics of lunes. In this fabric the element of vital exhilaration exudes in the form of a particularly noisome case of conjugal infidelity. The spectator is apprised that an elderly nobleman, the *Count von Kellinghausen*, is unsatisfactory to his wife, the *Countess Beata*, and that a youthful nobleman, the *Baron von Valkerlingk*, pleases her fancy and is entirely willing to provide her with consolation,—all the more because he also is unhappy in the state of marriage, and is wishful to taste the delights of “freedom.” The posture of circumstances thus displayed is obviously simple, and it is thought to be dramatic: a discontented wife enamoured of another woman’s husband, and a discontented husband enamoured of another man’s wife. Under such conditions in the family circle many things might happen. The facts observed in this case are that the *Baron* and the *Countess* have been lovers for twelve or fifteen years; that the rosy time of their illicit behavior is far behind them: that the *Baron* is a sucking politician,

engorged with a tremendous speech; that the *Countess's* heart-valves are out of order; and, finally, the agreement of the *Baron* and the *Countess* to maintain a platonic friendship, and the blind acceptance with which, for a considerable time, the elderly *Count* submits to an outrageous imposition, visible to everybody but himself. The doings and sufferings of those "platonic" lovers and the old *Count's* awakening to a clear perception of the criminal treachery of his wife and his friend constitute the substance of the piece. The ultimate catastrophe is the suicide of the *Countess Beata*, who, like the *Dinah* of *Mr. Villikins*, quaffs "a cup of cold pizen" as a pledge to "the Joy of Living," and is medically declared to be dead of heart failure—a fatality widely prevalent in recent times.

Most of the incidents in "The Joy of Living" are either trivial, absurd, preposterous, or unclean, and, as a whole, it is a prolix series of colloquies, by several groups of interlocutors, respecting a case of criminal concupiscence, and the language is a monotonous trickle of exgurgitated commonplace, purling along in a tumid flow of inflated discourse, spoken chiefly by the *Countess Beata*. In Act One it is said that there has been a criminal relation between the *Baron* and the *Countess*, and they have united in betraying a good, worthy, kindly, unsuspecting gentleman. In Act Two it is said that the secret is struggling to disclose itself. In Act Three the secret is avowed by both the guilty

parties, in response to the injured husband's inquiry. In Act Four it is said by the *Countess* that she loves and always has loved her paramour, whom she hails as her "discoverer" and "deliverer," with much more erotic fudge about her having "asserted the right of self-preservation" in the commission of adultery. Seldom or never has such a farrago of rotten nonsense been uttered from the stage as Mrs. Campbell enunciated in that scene of hysterical blather. The drift of the preachment is a sentimental extenuation of conduct that everybody knows to be wrong. There is a story that poor King George the Third, when his insanity was yet incipient, would give audible responses from the royal pew in St. George's Chapel, while the service was in progress, and that once, when the vicar was reading the Commandments, his majesty was heard to ejaculate approbation of each one till the seventh, when the royal voice astonished the congregation by an emphatic protest, crying, "That's a pity! That's a pity!" That would seem to be the opinion of Sudermann and his disciples.

"THE SORCERESS."

Sardou's play of "The Sorceress" was presented at the New Amsterdam Theatre, on October 10, 1904, and Mrs. Campbell assumed the chief part in it. The play is almost as edifying as Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," and the chief part is almost as credible as Scott's "Fenella"—the only absurdity that the great master of

fiction ever drew. Mrs. Campbell, who is nothing if not abnormal, offered a variant of the old, familiar type of amorous female crank, so frequent in Sardou's melodramatic concoctions, and so useful to performers who mistake singularity for genius and delirium for inspiration, and she offered it in her customary style, of affected embellishment and vapid eccentricity.

The character is a dusky, ardent, female Moor, named *Zoraya*, resident of Toledo, Spain, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and occupied in dispensing drugs, prosecuting intrigue, and practising mesmerism. The charms of *Zoraya* are irresistible. She has dark, lustrous eyes. She has a bust of what Browning calls "superb abundance," and an expansive satin back—the telescopic, giraffe figure,—the one that undulates. She is a Venus,—and the entire male population of Toledo is agitated by her. *Don Palacois*, in particular, a youth betrothed to *Joana*, daughter of the *Governor of Toledo*, finds his manly bosom rent with passion for the enchanting mesmerist, whom he meets by chance, in the woods, and who at once responds to his wooing, with prodigal liberality. The *Don*, however, must be wedded to *Joana*, and, in order to vitiate the nuptials,—of which she obtains knowledge after becoming *Palacois's* concubine,—*Zoraya* mesmerizes that obnoxious female, immediately after the wedding, and elopes with the willing bridegroom. Then the holy fathers of the Inquisition become anxious, and *Zoraya*,—confessing herself a witch, in

order to save the imperilled life of *Palacois*,—is convicted of sorcery and condemned to death. Later the *Governor* reprieves her, as a recompense for awakening the sleeping *Joana*, and she is released. A furious Toledo mob then assails her; she is defended by *Palacois*, at a cathedral door; and finally, further resistance being impossible, those lovers commit suicide.

Sardou's drama, aside from two scenes, is a prolix medley of pretentious nonsense. The passages relative to the strangulation of an inquisitorial agent and to the trial of *Zoraya* show good dramatic construction, suspense, and contrast well maintained, and they afford opportunities for acting. The rest is trash. Mme. Bernhardt, who for some time acted *Zoraya*, made a glittering show of feline vitality in it. Mrs. Campbell, like Dr. Johnson's Panting Time, "toils after her in vain." In this performer's acting the conspicuous attribute was affectation. There was much sibilant vocalization, as of a jubilant lemon-squeezer. There was much self-conscious posing. The moon-eyed stare of ecstasy, fixed on nothing, frequently became visible. There was the contortion of anguish, and there was the clinging clutch of desperation: old stage properties, all of them, and readily at the command of an old stager. There was, of course, the effort to invest absurdity with a semblance of reason, but the whole fabric was hollow. There was no effect of sincerity, and, consequently, no illusion. The delivery of the vehement denuncia-

tion of the Inquisition was voluble, but blurred, only partially articulate, and, from lack of innate dignity, more like scolding than passionate eloquence. Mrs. Campbell evinced no tragic power. Acting should impart something to an audience,—some treasure of thought, some impulse of feeling, some suggestion of beauty. Mrs. Campbell's acting imparted nothing beyond revelation of a morbid personality. The actress, nevertheless, had her audience—for in America there is an audience for everything.

“ELECTRA.”

The reader of “Vanity Fair” cannot have forgotten Thackeray's description of the entertainment given at Gaunt House, when *Becky Sharp* figured, in the charade, as the murderer of the slumbering *Agamemnon*: “her arms are bare and white—her tawny hair floats down her shoulders—her face is deadly pale—and her eyes are lighted up with a smile so ghastly that people quake as they look at her. . . . A Great Personage insisted on being presented to the charming *Clytemnestra*. ‘Heigh-ha? Run him through the body. Marry somebody else, hay?’ was the apposite remark made by his Royal Highness.”

That “apposite remark,” after all, contains the essence of the subject—known to scholars, but not, perhaps, to all readers. *Clytemnestra*, wife of *Agamemnon*, in concert with her lover, *Ægisthus*, has murdered her hus-

band and those criminals reign in his place. Of the three children of *Agamemnon*,—those children being *Orestes*, *Electra*, and *Chrysothemis*,—only *Chrysothemis* remains in the palace of Argos, she being, somewhat ignominiously, submissive to Fate. *Orestes*, absent, has been reported dead. *Electra* is expelled, and all her life is devoted to grievous wailing for her departed sire and to the thirst for vengeance upon his murderers. False assurance that her brother *Orestes* has indeed perished aggravates her woe and largely augments both the bulk of her lamentation and the length of her speeches. *Orestes* presently returns to Argos and, to the great comfort of *Electra*, he kills both *Clytemnestra* and *Ægisthus*. Later *Orestes* is pursued by furies, but, being protected by *Apollo* and acquitted at a trial before the Areopagus, under the presidency of *Minerva*, he is cleared from censure. The theme is set forth in detail by *Æschylus*, *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*,—the latter having given particular attention to the episode of *Electra's* passion, anguish, and avenging purpose.

It was a variant version of the play of *Sophocles* that Mrs. Campbell chose for theatrical exposition, and which she brought forth in America, at the Garden Theatre, New York, on February 11, 1908. She appeared as *Electra*, but, as she did not possess the qualifications of a tragic actress, her emergence in that part was not impressive. In one respect the character and the performer were found accordant, both being intrinsically artificial,

—the predominant attribute of both being monotony alike of condition and expression. *Electra*, notwithstanding all her wailings for her defunct sire, is completely concentrated upon herself, forever prating about her personal misfortunes. The key-note of the character is self-pity,—not filial love,—and therefore it does not awaken sympathy. Her longing for her brother is not affection for him but solicitude for herself. She is an elderly spinster, morosely self-conscious and mercilessly voluble. *Clytemnestra*, if not more agreeable, is, at least, sincere; for, having killed a husband whom she disliked, she openly avouches her crime. The old Greek Tragedies, in general, reek with gore and smoulder in horror,—a hideous blemish for which the great beauty of the original language has always been vaunted as redeeming grace. Particular examination of them discovers that the passions which they expose are, chiefly, lust and hate, impelling to actions of carnality and ferocity. It occurs to the weary mind that it would like, occasionally, to repose on something a little more conducive to peace than a spectacle of the depraved operations of human conduct when that conduct is swayed and governed by animal propensities.

Greek scholars insist that the spirit of Greek poetry never has been, and, apparently, never can be, transmuted into English, yet as often as a translated Greek tragedy is presented on our Stage the persons engaged in the presentment of it persist in sending forth procla-

mations concerning it that are couched in the most extravagant language, as if it were something heaven-born, sacrosanct, and supernally illustrious, and their bosoms appear to be lacerated beyond medicament if anybody ventures to refer to the subject in any spirit other than that of adoration. The fact, meantime, remains (though there is an amazing dread of speaking the truth about it) that English translations of Greek tragedies are heavy and tedious, and that no presentment has been made of an English translation of a Greek tragedy that was not, in the nature of things, "caviare" to the general public. The best representations of tragedy derived from the Greek which the American public has seen were those of Ristori as *Médée* and Mounet-Sully as *Ædipus*,—and those were in Italian and French: nor were those performances fully appreciable by a large number of persons. The production of "Electra" made by Mrs. Campbell served once more to show how dull an English version of a Greek play can be,—especially when it reaches the English-speaking Stage by way of the German, and when it bristles, as Mr. Arthur Symons's rendering of Herr Hoefmanthal's Teutonic variant of *Æschylus*, Euripides, and Sophocles does, with such abominations as "one" sees, "one" does, "one" goes, etc.,—and particularly it served to show how unsuitable Mrs. Campbell and her associates were to illustration of those Greek themes of fate, madness, torture, suicide, parricide, murder,

impending doom, and all the rest of the pageantry of horror in which the Greek poets were wont to revel.

Mrs. Campbell's aptitude and talents were seen at their best in what may aptly be designated as domestic melodrama. In achieving publicity she imitated the bizarre methods of Sarah Bernhardt. In speaking she imitated the golden voice of Ellen Terry. As *Electra* she pervaded the stage, posing, gesticulating, pouring forth a torrent of lachrymose loquacity, and seeming to be a kind of human exotic. She wore a short dress, of blue-black color, on which many patches had been sewn to indicate squalor of condition, and likewise she wore a black veil, which, from time to time, she wreathed about her head, so that she could raise it and extend it and glare from beneath it, emitting strange sounds. Her arms and shoulders,—remarkably solid, for a female supposed to be emaciated by suffering,—were bare and brilliantly white. The display was curious and eccentric; never in the least sympathetic. The merit of the performance was its power of continuity. Mrs. Campbell was at her best in the longer speech to *Clytemnestra*. The value of her extensive professional experience was shown in her resolute persistence, on the occasion of the first New York performance, in several speeches of which she was not quite sure and in her inveterate exertion of technical authority.

In reviewing the professional proceedings of Mrs. Campbell, the observer saw nothing but a long proces-

sion of hussies and fools, some of them dissolute in conduct and unsavory in repute, and all of them morbid in fibre and unhealthful in influence. It almost seemed as if that actress had pursued a deliberate purpose to identify herself with the freaks of degenerate dramatic literature and to become the representative incarnation of the detestable character and reprehensible conduct of bad women. Scarcely a decent woman was exemplified in the whole American career of that performer. *Mrs. Sang* was the best of them, but *Mrs. Sang* occurred in a play of unspeakable stupidity, and *Mrs. Sang* was a woman in bed, moribund with spine disease. Even *Aunt Jeannie*, in the dull play of that name, though not depraved, was indelicate, ill-bred, and sexually vulgar. A more melancholy record could scarcely be imagined; nor was it brightened by display of any exceptional talent in the art of acting. *Mme. Bernhardt* sometimes made her sexual monsters interesting,—wielding the lethal hairpin or the persuasive hatchet with Gallic grace and sweet celerity; but *Mrs. Campbell's* trollops were suggestive of a sort of vicious, crazy giraffe. In the several Avatars of that performer the American public was provided with a sickening excess of diseased emotions, mephitic sentimentality, and hysterical nonsense, impertinently offered as “moral lessons.” The epigram commended to Queen Caroline, just after the odoriferous trial of that royal person, seemed singularly appropriate to *Mrs. Tan-*

queray, the *Countess Beata*, and the rest of the degenerate tribe:

“Most gracious Queen, we thee implore
To go away and sin no more:
Or, if that effort is too great,
To go away, at any rate.”

And, thinking of the insufferable proceedings of Mrs. Campbell; especially of her revival of “The Second Mrs. Tanqueray” and of the almost coincident presentment of Pinero’s vicious “Iris,” as well as of the vapid personality and crude, affected, tedious, pretentious performances of her principal American associate, Mr. John Blair, that appeal was, by me, supplemented thus:

And, further to relieve our care,
Be pleased to capture Mr. Blair,—
Conveying him across the main,—
And never visit us again!
For we are weary of the mess
Of tainted females in distress,—
The coarse, unlovely, long parades
Of Arthur Wing Pinero’s jades,—
And there is nothing we could spare
So well as you *and* Mr. Blair.

XIII.

LAURENCE IRVING IN AMERICA.

*"If white and black blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?"*

—POPE.

LAURENCE IRVING, second son of Henry Irving, came to America for the first time in 1899, as a member of the theatrical company of his great father, and he also acted here, in that association, in 1901-'02, and in 1903-'04. He is well known both as dramatist and actor. His plays are "Godefroï and Yolande," "Richard Lovelace," "Peter the Great," "The Fool Hath Said, 'There Is No God,'" and the adapted translations of Sardou's "Robespierre" and "Dante." If Laurence Irving had done nothing else his remarkable play of "Peter the Great,"—which his father produced and acted in, at the London Lyceum Theatre, January 1, 1898,—would have demonstrated his extraordinary ability. It is more than unfortunate, it is lamentable, that a man of such exceptional talent should have mistaken the province of the Theatre as he has done, and undertaken to reform mankind and improve society by the singular process of presenting on the Stage some

of the most noxious subjects and repulsive spectacles which have been obtruded there in our time. Mr. Irving's first missionary endeavor was made with "Godefroi and Yolande," which Henry Irving, swayed by paternal partiality, produced, in Chicago, March 13, 1896, and at Abbey's Theatre, New York, on May 4, following, and in which Ellen Terry appeared, as *Yolande*.

"GODEFROI AND YOLANDE."

That play relates to a mediæval time and it aims at weirdness of character. The following is a synopsis of its contents:

Yolande is a courtesan, in the time of *Philippe*, surnamed "Le Bel," King of France. She holds her court, and many distinguished persons are her followers. *Godefroi*, her clerk, a man of lowly birth, loves her, but she views him merely as a servant. The play opens on a night of storm. Without the castle all is wild, but within, in a spacious hall, the ruddy light from the fireplace and the gleam of torches make a scene of comfort. The attendants, preparing for a festival, are decorating the hall with garlands. *Yolande* calls aloud and often, and her maids go to her and return, again and again. *Yolande* is ill, and *Godefroi* has been sent for a doctor. A poor, blind woman, led by a child, enters the hall. These are the mother and sister of *Godefroi*. A *Doctor* comes in and sings as follows:

"Merry old skeleton, flesh underlying,

Living or dying,

Laughing or crying—

Merry old skull!

Flesh may fall in,

Old skull still doth grin,

Grin, skull! grin, skull! grin—grin, skull—

Grin—Grin!"

The maids watch him fearfully as he goes to the fireplace and brushes the snow from his garments. *Godefroi* enters, and, seeing his mother and sister, embraces them tenderly, inquiring the cause of their coming. "To take you away from here, my son," the mother replies. *Godefroi* is summoned to *Yolande's* presence. The *Doctor* and the attending women discuss her illness and *Godefroi's* infatuation, and *Megarde*, *Godefroi's* mother, who, being blind, fears not the *Doctor*, as do others who see him, confides in him. The Pageant, or Masque, to be celebrated, has been written by *Godefroi*, and it is said by one of the waiting women that *Philippe*, the King, and the King's brother, the *Archbishop*, will be present. A scene between *Godefroi* and his mother ensues, in which the former discloses his love for *Yolande*; but the mother conquers, and *Godefroi* promises to leave the scene of his infatuation. *Yolande* enters, queenlike, impetuous, and cruel. She is uneasy at what she has learned from the *Doctor*, and she vents her impatience on *Godefroi*, bidding him drive

forth into the storm his mother and sister. Lepers come to the gates of *Yolande's* castle and she sends her menials to drive them away. Then arrive *Sir Sagramour*, courier of *King Philippe*, and the *Archbishop*, and in a conversation with the *Doctor* the knight shows that he understands the terrible plagues of the East. "And could you know a leper by the touch or look—say, of the hand?" asks the *Doctor*. "Indeed, I could," replies *Sir Sagramour*. The Masque is now in progress, and *Yolande* appears as *Venus*. *Sir Sagramour* claims to kiss her hand, and the *King* and the *Archbishop* would follow him, when, just as *Sir Sagramour* is about to touch his lips to it, he gazes at her intently, cries aloud, rushes to the *King* and the *Archbishop* to prevent their approach to *Yolande*, and, amid a fearful tumult, declares her to be a leper; whereupon the *Doctor* cries out, "Aye! She is stricken with leprosy!" The populace demands that *Yolande* shall remove her mask, and as she does so she is anathematized by the *King*, the *Archbishop*, and the people. All rush from her presence, except the despised clerk, who now avows his love. *Yolande* cries, "Perish my body, so my soul survives." The lepers call for their "sister"; the *King's* officer, with a gray garment, the badge of leprosy, and a bell which the lepers must ring, comes upon the scene and attempts to drive her out. *Godefroi* alone supports her. *Yolande* yields to him, and they depart together, while the curtain falls to the sound of distant voices of lepers crying,

"Unclean! Unclean!"—an apt and comprehensive comment on the subject.

Upon Ellen Terry's embodiment of *Yolande* the remembrance of those who best understand and most appreciate her fine genius,—in which were blended, as they have seldom or never before been blended in one person, the constituents of poetry, spirituality, and humanity,—lingers with deep regret. Not that the performance was deficient in either imagination, sensibility, physical loveliness, dramatic art, or personal charm,—but because of natural objection to stage portrayal of the grossness inherent in the character. *Yolande* is an image of moral turpitude combined with loathsome physical disease, and no matter how well depicted she must, in the essential nature of things, be obnoxious to those who are able to comprehend the meaning of what they see. Nothing that is said or done by her counts for the value of a straw in redeeming her. She means nothing in art, beyond a fleeting picture of terrified dismay, and she means nothing in ethics beyond the hackneyed bugbear of a "frightful example." Such a part is completely superfluous on the Stage—and it is as far beneath the genius of such a woman as Ellen Terry as the wastes of a quagmire are beneath the stars. There was, apparently, in the young dramatist's mind, when he wrote his play of "Godefroi and Yolande," some idea of illustrating and extolling the celestial heroism which impelled Father

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Damien (1840-1888) to sacrifice himself by going among lepers and casting his lot with them, in order to win their souls to the faith which he believed essential to the salvation of their souls. That idea, abstractly considered, is noble, but the moment it becomes mingled,—as in Mr. Irving's play,—with a man's physical passion for a woman it is desecrated.

"THE INCUBUS."

During the season of 1908-'09 Laurence Irving, accompanied by his wife, known, professionally, as Mabel Hackney, came to America and presented in Music Halls a version of "Grangoire, or the Ballad Monger," in which he acted *King Louis the Eleventh*, Miss Hackney acting *Grangoire*. The publicly avowed purpose of that undertaking was to earn money with which to adventure in the legitimate Theatre. On April 27 and 30, 1909, Mr. Irving presented, at the Hackett Theatre, New York, an English translation, called "The Incubus," made by himself, of a French play by M. Eugène Brieux, entitled "Les Hannelons." The title of Mr. Irving's translation proved to be well chosen. "The Incubus" afforded one more illustration of a widely prevalent and deplorable tendency, in contemporary dramatic writing, toward analysis of morbid themes and of the complications sequent on vicious conduct. The spirit of it is cynical, the satire sarcastic. The fable relates that an elderly *Professor* has involved himself

in an intrigue with an insistent, selfish, vulgar young woman, and that, after five years of domestic intercourse, he has become heartily sick of her society, while she, in turn, has become more or less weary of him. The *Professor's* "incubus," *Charlotte* by name, compromises herself with a veterinary doctor, who has been called in to administer remedies to her sick dog. The *Professor* seizes the fair opportunity to get rid of her, but fails in his purpose. The young woman jumps into the Seine, under circumstances that insure her rescue, leaving, on the shore, a sentimental letter, containing the *Professor's* address, so that, when snatched from a watery grave, she is promptly conveyed back to her erudite paramour. The piece amounts to nothing more than a satirical exposition of an unpleasant mess, and it is difficult to understand why it should ever have been written or ever produced. Mr. Irving acted in it, giving a performance notable for clarity of ideal, personal distinction, and elocutionary skill, but barren of anything more than technical utility.

"THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF M. DUPONT."

Mr. Irving came again to America in the fall of 1909, and travelled through the country, giving performances of "The Incubus" under a new name,—"*The Affinity*." In the spring of 1910 he returned to New York, and, on April 13, at the Comedy Theatre, presented a translation of another play by M. Brieux,

called "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont." Before producing that play Mr. Irving seemed to think it necessary to defend and justify his course as manager and actor, and, speaking publicly, before the Lotos Club of New York, he said:

"Gentlemen, I must say myself, when I hear all this about the prurient drama, I perhaps am a little in the dark. Mr. Lee Shubert is here at my side." [Mr. Lee Shubert was associated with Mr. Irving in the presentation of "The Three Daughters."] "In a sense I have been a play-builder. I don't quite know what prurient drama is. I do know that one-fourth of Shakespeare's works cannot be spoken in public, and I consider 'The Merry Widow' a highly deleterious entertainment. . . . It does seem to me that the difference is that whereas formerly the dramatists wrote the lines that were humbly followed, the dramatists now, the greatest modern dramatists, *deal with the fundamental questions of life in a sterner fashion and handle them as a part of their scheme, and as conveying a moral which they desire to impress*; and from all I hear and from all I read I don't think that those morals were at any time more in need of being impressed than at present.

"Well, I am afraid that what I am saying, after the eloquent words we have heard, may seem rather brusque, but I think that before the drama can again spread its wings and reach the great height it had reached under the inspiration of Shakespeare, we must, as Eugene Walter has done in America, Rostand in France, and Shaw in England, *keep close to life, and we must examine the dark corners before we can illumine [sic] the lighter ones.*"

As a specimen of flatulent nonsense that deliverance, I believe, is unique. The statement as to the works of Shakespeare is, manifestly, false and foolish. Every-

body who knows anything about dramatic literature knows that even the best works of the old dramatists contain some passages unfit for use in modern representation. But it is not true that "one-fourth of the works of Shakespeare cannot be spoken in public," nor is it true that reasonable objection can be made to the public speaking of even one-fourteenth of the works of Shakespeare. Rank plays have long existed. It needs no ghost come from the grave, nor any itinerant actor come from London, to tell us that. Degeneracy in the drama is not a modern movement. It is notable, however, that from the time when Pinero's play of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was launched upon our Stage the dramatic current has been running steadily and with renewed force toward a literal, brazen, shameless portrayal of depraved persons, iniquitous conduct, and vile social conditions. Pinero is a dramatist of brilliant ability. His incursions into the social sewers have been attended by ample pecuniary success. Other writers, American as well as English, speedily followed his example. The list of impure plays that have seen the light would be a long one. The stage has been disgraced by the putrescent "Sapho" of Mr. Fitch, the monstrous "Salome" of Oscar Wilde,—commingling mania with foulness,—and Eugene Walter's photographic abomination of "The Easiest Way." Vileness has crept in where it could least have been expected. Even in the New Theatre—an institution which, it

was promised and understood, would be devoted, exclusively, to the best dramatic art—a crude, pointless, useless, tainted play, called “The Nigger,” a tissue of impertinent prattle about the terrible subject of miscegenation in the Southern States of the Union—took its place in the regular repertory of the house, and was received as a mere matter-of-course incident, notwithstanding that it contains one of the most revolting scenes (that of the struggle between the “nigger” and the white woman) that have been acted on any stage or before any audience assumed to be composed of well-bred, cultivated, self-respecting persons. Public tolerance, not to say approbation, of such spectacles is of sorrowful significance. Those presentments, and others of their kindred, have never done any good, but, inevitably, have done evil. In the particular instance of “The Nigger” the utter futility of all such exhibitions was especially exemplified: for, after the horrible scene had been enacted and the lowered lights were turned up, the spectators, and *especially the women in the boxes*, were seen to be quite radiant with smiles, eager and animated in conversation, well pleased, and, apparently, in no way seriously impressed by the terrible theme presented to their notice, or offended by the brutality of the theatrical situation which had been set before them, or incensed by the revolting physical literalness of the performance they had seen.

Soon after that disgraceful exhibition came Mr.

Irving, a man of fine and various talents, a scholar, an actor of authority and of decisive ability, with the prestige of the most illustrious name in all the long history of the Stage—and produced “The Three Daughters of M. Dupont,” representative of nothing except that which is sordid and base in human nature and domestic life, and remarkable only for one exceedingly disgusting scene, in which husband and wife, after abusing each other in coarsely recriminative language, some of which is unfit to be heard and should not be spoken, engage in a sort of human cat-fight, snorting and snarling, upsetting the furniture, and presenting an odious spectacle of vulgarity; the woman, finally, biting the man, and the man then hurling the woman upon a lounge:—and this was set forth as *Acting*. Such it may have been in respect to mere technicality, which, alone, is absolutely futile. It was accurate, but it presented only the appearance of wanton savagery. Yet a gentleman was found to authorize such behavior, and a gentlewoman was found to submit to such treatment, as a requirement of “Art”: and the audience—large, fashionable, and, apparently, cultivated—seemed neither shocked nor even surprised. It does not signify that several vulgarians are correctly delineated in that play: that feat has been accomplished thousands of times; its accomplishment is not in any way remarkable; and, unless it leads to some beneficial result, its accomplishment is completely abortive. It does not signify, either,

that two pairs of swindlers have grotesquely or comically overreached themselves as well as each other, and that the "marriage of convenience" has been declared reprehensible. All that is mossy with age and mildewed with tediousness. The gist of the matter is a marital quarrel—the wife proclaiming her desire, and right, to bear children, and the husband declaring that she shall not be permitted to do so. A pleasant, delicate theme, truly, for a mixed audience, of all ages and conditions, to see illustrated and to hear "discussed" in a theatre—the "discussion" taking the form of much commonplace, vulgar colloquy, and culminating in a brutal brawl.

Every person who has thought on the subject is aware that marriages often prove unfortunate and cause unhappiness; that the customs of marriage, which vary in different nations, are nowhere perfect; and that the laws affecting parties to the marriage contract are, in various places and in various ways, defective. The institution of marriage, however, as it exists, is the best that, hitherto, has been devised for the conservation of civilized society, and the intelligence of civilized society is not looking to the Stage for any improvement of it—which is, indeed, fortunate, for it would look in vain. Such plays as "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont," and indeed all plays that are designed to implicate and disseminate *doctrine* as to marriage, are superfluous; and many such plays

are grossly obnoxious, alike to good judgment, good feeling, and good taste. The tendency of these theatrical "doctrinaires," invariably, is toward something that they call "naturalism"—their manifest desire being, as Mr. Boyesen declared his adored Ibsen's desire was, "to break down the code of traditional ethics." This poisonous sophistry has conspicuously shown itself, of late years, in poetry and novels, no less than in plays. There are certain authors who "put themselves into the trick of singularity," assume anomalous mental attitudes, contravene established principles of morality and taste, and, with a flamboyant pretentiousness of originality, misuse the arts—disseminating bizarre notions, well calculated, if they could prevail, to demoralize the whole social system. It is from authors of that class, and from their confederates (some of whom are actors and theatrical managers) and from their befuddled votaries, that the public hears of "Emancipated Literature," "The Independent Theatre," and "The Drama of Ideas." Those apostles of mental and moral dilaceration obviously desire that society should reorganize itself upon a basis of principles (or no principles) which represent reversion to the primitive state of man. There is no other apparent way of interpreting their mischievous ebullitions—for this is a fair statement of the sum of their doctrine:

Man is an animal; his animal instincts are *natural*; *whatever is natural is right*; those natural instincts,

being right, ought to be followed, without regard to "artificial restraints." Spiritual promptings are symptoms of debility. Religion is superstition. The institution of marriage, as now constituted, is, in particular, a grievous obstacle to Nature, because an artificial restraint upon the fulfilment of those splendid desires which are a natural proclivity of the human race and its crowning glory. A chaste woman is, necessarily, a vapid dullard. A virtuous man is, necessarily, a contemptible milksop. The words "chaste" and "virtuous" are terms invented, by bigotry, to designate a bondage enjoined and maintained by foolish social law. A human being attains to the highest pitch of nobility possible to our mortal state when enthralled and dominated by amatory emotion. Literature, and, in particular, Dramatic Literature, should never be "anti-naturalistic," and should proceed not from the genial intellect, but from the impulse of lawless animal passion; and Poetry, since it is the supreme vehicle of expression, should be the explosive eloquence of erotic frenzy.

As applied to the administration of the Stage (and they have been liberally so applied) those doctrines signify that the province of the Theatre is to supplement the police court; to portray the clinic, the jail, and the madhouse; to show "life as it is"—with the preliminary assumption that "life as it is" reeks with disease and iniquity. According to that standard,

the need of the Stage (and of the public) is "strong meat"—succulent, gory, "fit food for strong men." All decent drama is only "milk for babes," and all persons who think otherwise—who contend for "the modesty of nature," for decency, for the sanctity of the individual, for purity in art, and for spiritual impulse toward nobleness of thought and conduct—are "bourgeois sentimentalists." In the mean time the fact is that, under these and other malign influences, the Theatre has been much degraded. In itself it is a good institution, and, when rightly conducted, it can be made subservient to noble purposes and diffusive of an immense power for good; but to-day it has, through the pernicious industry of the purveyors of theatrical garbage, most shamefully been brought to such a pass that, actually, it cannot be comprehensively observed and intelligently discussed except by persons who first take the trouble to acquaint themselves, to some extent at least, with criminology and nosology; and often it compels a plea not only for morality, but for common decency.

Some works that treat, in the cold language of science, of the disorders, physical and mental, that impel to aberrancy or depravity or madden to crime are, by law, not permitted to be sold to the general public, and cannot be obtained except by lawyers and physicians; yet literal exhibitions are not infrequently made, on the stage, of that very disorder, aberrancy, or

depravity the causes and analysis of which are, by law, excluded from the public access; and it is equally amazing and deplorable that many persons who, apparently, are reputable members of society and denizens of virtuous homes do actually pay for the opportunity to see such conduct and hear such language in the Theatre as should revolt a decent mind, and such as, not infrequently, would warrant a call for the interference of the police to prevent its continuance. The success of some theatres in New York, which have, practically, adopted the fashion of certain notorious "show" dives in Paris, can be understood; but it is not entirely easy to understand the acceptance, by seemingly well-bred, cultivated persons, in large numbers, of plays which relate, in the baldest manner, to obnoxious subjects, and which illustrate the presentment of those subjects by actions and colloquies that are grossly indelicate or openly indecent—unless the reason is discovered in Pope's lines:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

That "monster" certainly has been seen with sufficient frequency on the New York Stage to have become familiar, and if endurance of her companionship be all that is essential to inspire the pity that is akin to love,

then it can be understood that the public has ample reason for having become enamoured of her foulness.

Abundant opportunity has been afforded for public inspection of "the seamy side" of life. Consideration may well be bestowed on a question of vital importance, equally to the Public and the Stage: *Where shall the line be drawn?* It is not prudery that protests against the fabrics of theatrical writing which that admirable actor and mature and wise thinker Mr. Forbes-Robertson (in a speech, at the Lotos Club, preceding Mr. Laurence Irving) rightly designated "the prurient drama"; it is common sense; it is reverent devotion to the great art of acting, and therewithal an abiding confidence in the Theatre as a potent social institution, naturally of great beneficence to the community; it is rational, inveterate opposition to decadence in dramatic art;—not decadence from any standard, actual or fanciful, of writing or acting, in any period of the Past, but decadence from the plain, simple, truthful, right standard of good morals and good taste in the Present. The welfare of society does not require that the Theatre should concern itself with admonitory illumination of "the dark places" of the social system. The Press, day by day, attends,—and attends far too minutely,—to that branch of illumination, and the Courts are continuously industrious, as they are obliged to be, in the same afflictive employment. The public has no need of the-

atrical documents about miscegenation, "marriages of convenience," cellular pathology, hereditary disease, functional disorders, and physical and mental aberrancy. It is not as a place exclusively for the much-mentioned "young person" that the Theatre is advocated; but the Theatre should be—and as such it is advocated—a place to which persons of all ages and of all classes can repair, with the full assurance that they will neither be nauseated by vice nor insulted by specious extenuation of immorality. It does not seem unreasonable to urge that the same spirit of refinement which, among decent persons, is peremptory in private life should be respected and maintained in assemblies of the public. In the vast population of the United States there must, necessarily, exist a prodigious variety of tastes, and, accordingly, the popularity of many kinds of theatrical exhibition is comprehensible. The Theatre requires the support of the multitude and could not long exist without it. The favor of the multitude, accordingly, must be sought—though there are limits, often disregarded, beyond which no theatrical suitor for the popular approval is entitled to pass. But intellect should lead, not follow, and it is in alluring the multitude to wish for what it ought to have that a theatrical manager *manages*, and thus discriminates himself from the mere unscrupulous speculator in theatrical wares—the huckster who, willing to present fine and true drama "if it will pay," does not hesitate to debauch the Stage for the sake of profit, just

as the dishonest manufacturer does not hesitate to make tools for the burglar as readily as he makes them for the carpenter.

Evil, unhappily, has its place in the scheme of creation, and, accordingly, it enters human life and it enters art; but the introduction and treatment of it in art should always, and very sternly, be governed by the intellectual law of selection. The sewer and the cess-pool exist, and man is capable of bestial conduct and shocking depravity. The world contains many horrible things, but the analysis of them is out of place in the Theatre, because destructive of taste and injurious to the public morals. The play that introduces upon the public stage any subject improper to be presented there, or treats any subject there presented in an improper manner, is a play to be condemned, and the condemnation should be made as severe as language can make it, and should extend to its author as represented by it, to its producer, and to the actors who appear in it, all of whom are implicated in an offence against society. A pussy-footed and mealy-mouthed press will not avail. Some minds are pervious to nothing less than a trip-hammer. If the mission of the dramatic art be not to help mankind—to cheer, instruct, inspire, and improve men and women, making the soul pure, the mind gentle and strong, and the whole being spiritually finer,—then dramatic art has no place which intellect is called on to recognize and advocate, and it should be dismissed at

once into Milton's "limbo," at "the back side of the world far off, the Paradise of Fools."

No insistency, therefore, can be excessive that urges the duty of all intellectual authorities—writers, actors, artists, all persons who have the power of reaching the public intelligence—to present, for sympathy and admiration, ideas of nobility, objects of beauty, themes of joy and hope, truths that intensify the life of the affections, images of fidelity and courage, the virtue that is never insipid, and the loveliness that is never tame; and thus, by giving blessings, to create, extend, and make universal the desire for the blessings that they give. With a Theatre administered in that spirit there would indeed be ample ground for conviction that every cloud will pass away from the Temple of Acting. Let us strive unceasingly for that goal. All human life has, for its ultimate object, a spiritual victory. The divine spirit works in humanity in many subtle ways. It is man's instinctive, intuitive imitation of Nature that creates artificial objects of beauty—the arch of the cathedral repeating the vista of the forest. Those objects, in turn, react on the human mind, and deepen and heighten its sense of grandeur and beauty. It is man's interpretation of humanity that has disclosed to him the idea of a Divine Father and a spiritual destiny. All things work together for that result—the dramatic art deeply and directly, because, when rightly administered, it is the clear mirror of all that is splendid in

character and all that is noble and gentle in conduct —showing ever the excellence to be emulated and the glory to be gained, soothing our cares, dispelling thoughts of trouble, and casting a glamour of romantic grace over all the commonplaces of the world. Against whatever is inimical to the Stage, thus valued and thus employed, the intellect of the time should surge like a sea of fire, to blast, to wither, to destroy.

Those views and the expression of them gave much offence to the proselytizing Mr. Irving and his admiring advocates. The fact that offensive plays by M. Brieux should be specifically and frankly denounced as such, even though that writer happens to be "a French Academician," seems to have caused special anguish in the breast of Mr. Irving. This summary of that actor's achievement on the American Stage can, notwithstanding his tenderness for the sacrosanct Brieux, best be closed by reprinting in full the rejoinder to Mr. Irving's disparagement of the American public and American critical reviewers which I wrote and published in "Harper's Weekly," June 18, 1910:

LAURENCE IRVING'S HOLY TASK.

*"O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts
An' tell aloud*

*Their jugglin', hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd!"*

—BURNS.

During the past ten or fifteen years a lively desire that the public morals should be rectified has made itself conspicuously manifest in the local Theatre, and extraordinary endeavors in the cause of virtue have forced themselves on critical attention. The motive has, of course, been pious, but the method has been peculiar, and certain of the apostles of reform have somewhat startled observation by the unexpectedness of their investiture with the didactic surplice. Sister Shaw, for example, surprised the community when she emerged to ventilate the business troubles of *Mrs. Warren*; Sister Marlowe certainly astonished it when she danced for the cadaver of the Apostle *John*, and divulged her ingenuous and tender plea in extenuation of sweet *Salome*; and Brother Sothern struck it into "amazement and admiration" when he announced, and practically illustrated, his devout purpose to make the public understand that "this love matter is not *altogether* a lascivious and sensual" one. Certain other moral healers, while they cannot be thought to have surprised anybody by their appearance in the good work, can perhaps be rightly said to have administered an edifying shock,—no doubt salutary, though not always reverently appreciated. Brother Al. H. Woods, for instance, while striving mightily, met with rather a hard fate, for his "Narrow

Path" was treated much as the Jews treated Saint Stephen, having been driven from the New York Stage after only one performance; his "Girl with the Whooping-cough" was consigned to durance and to darkness by the flinty-hearted police, and his "Get Busy with Emily" was angrily repudiated alike by the heathen of New Haven and the ungodly of Chicago. Such sometimes is the cruel fortune of the best and gentlest laborers in the vineyard of righteousness. The holy industry, nevertheless, has proceeded, and doubtless it will continue. Much help has come from abroad. In all the long annals of eleemosynary endeavor there is, indeed, no record more touching than that of the acute solicitude which for a long time has surged in the expansive British theatrical bosom relative to the melancholy moral condition of the inhabitants of the United States. Missionary effort to awaken and regenerate our lost and wandering people has been well-nigh incessant. Long ago, it will be remembered, Sister Kendal brought to this benighted land the solemn and, of course, much-needed monition from good old Father Pinero that, whether widowers or bachelors, the males of America when choosing wives should take care not deliberately to choose accomplished, experienced wantons. Long ago, also, Sister Nethersole, whom we have always with us, brought hither a kindred message, enforcing it by the frightful examples of calorific *Car-men*, promiscuous *Sapho*, and vacillant *Marianne*.

Brother Hare soon followed, sounding the alarm to sinners by his remarkable preachments about *Mrs. Ebb-smith* and the nocturnal assignation of the *Gay Lord Quex*. Sister Campbell and Sister Langtry duly wheeled into line, with the woful modern instances of *Countess Beata* and ardent *Mrs. Trevelwyn*; and Brother Jones, contending for *Mrs. Rebellious Susan's* right to commit adultery, brought up the rear with a passionate assurance that he was actually "sweating" in his toil to save us from the wrath to come. No one of those ministers of grace, however, has essayed the holy task of our moral redemption with a zeal surpassing that of Mr. Laurence Irving. That Good Samaritan's anxiety about us is very great,—almost as great as that of the itinerant evangelist who, on board an express train, selected a moment when the train was speeding at about a mile a minute over a particularly rough section of the road to distribute to his fellow passengers a tract headed with the pertinent inquiry, "Are You Aware That You Are All Going to Hell?"

Remarks of mine relative to the rank, vulgar, offensive play of "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont,"—a revolting compound of cynicism, indelicacy, and brutality,—made by the French dramatist M. Brieux and produced by Mr. Irving at the Comedy Theatre, caused the publication by that actor of a letter,—resentful of critical condemnation of that play,—in which he undertakes to vindicate it, and prom-

ises to reproduce it here and to supplement it with other plays of a kindred character from the pen of the same author. Those supplementary plays are more or less distinctly described by the irate comedian, and his designation of them seems to herald the theatrical presentment of much absurdity and some little feculence. The first of those plays, says Mr. Irving, "deals with the blighting effect of medical theory on the individual and with the charlatanism which enters so largely into modern medicine." The second is labelled "an arraignment of divorce." The third is said to depict "the frauds and evils of French political life." The fourth "shows the evil and devastating effects of the widespread custom of bringing wet-nurses from the provinces for the children of Parisians"—a display which would seem to promise great practical edification in America. The fifth "deals principally with the psychology of the married state when love is not at the bottom of the union." The sixth asseverates "the need of the human race for faith, whether false or true,"—a declaration calculated to astound by its portentous originality. The seventh—"Les Hannetons" ("The Affinity"), which Mr. Irving brought forth here, and which he has many times presented—is, as he approvingly certifies by quoting the words of its author, "a study of free love and of the misery that is bound to ensue from it when the couple have nothing in common but their physical infatuation." All this Mr. Irving, in the abounding

generosity of his missionary spirit, intends to bestow upon the play-going public of New York by way, as he expresses it, of "turning the light into the dark places." Medical theory, divorce, corruption in French politics, wet-nurses from the country, psychology of loveless marriage, essential religion, and free love! How nice it all will be! And *what* a comfort the public will find in it! "Here's richness," said *Mr. Squeers* as he gazed into the jug of skimmed milk provided for the breakfast of the starving children at Dotheboys Hall! Lead, kindly light!

Mr. Irving is a very serious man; he has a very serious purpose, and as he wishes to be taken very seriously he shall be accommodated in that particular. He has declared his belief that it was "provincialism" which caused certain auditors of his recent ministry—"because the *debate* [*sic*] was carried on in francs and not in dollars, and in thousands, not millions—to miss the trend and universal application of Brieux's marvelous character-drawing, and fail to enjoy his eschewal of all the ordinary spurious complications and coincidents that go to make up the ordinary theatrical plot." He is entirely mistaken in that belief. Nobody who saw "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont" missed its "trend" or could possibly miss it. The "trend" was distinctly obvious toward almost everything that is obnoxious and much that is grossly improper in the Theatre. A group of contemptible persons was dis-

played, and attention was directed to greed, meanness, sensuality, and utter selfishness; and finally, by way of moral tag, the edifying intimation was provided (by a regretful member of the *demi-monde*) that a woman who finds herself unhappy in the state of marriage will not find happiness in exchanging the position of a wife for that of a courtesan. Mr. Irving's audience understood perfectly well the drift of his deliverance of M. Brieux's preachment, and, deeming that no such monition is needed by the women of this community, considered it alike superfluous, impertinent, and vulgar. It is true that the American public still occasionally shows some provincialism, but that showing is not made in dulness of apprehension; it is denoted chiefly in an exaggerated respect for foreign actors only because they are foreign, and in a certain strange obsequious acceptance of their impudent vaporings, the proper place for which is not the press, but the waste-paper basket.

Mr. Irving, it seems, judging by his published letter and his frequent curtain speeches, has not been altogether pleased with the reception accorded to the Brieux plays and to himself in the Theatre and the Press of America. "It may well be that neither America nor England," he declares, "is yet ripe for Brieux any more than the critics are." It may, indeed! But *ripe* is not the word. The state of England can only be conjectured; that of America is known; our country has many defects, but it is not yet *rotten*, as

assuredly it would be if it could take delight in such tainted trash as "Les Hanneçons" and "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont." It is a pity that Mr. Irving finds himself dissatisfied with his reception here. The American community is the most liberal in the world toward the Theatre. It has no prejudice, though it decidedly prefers that actors should act and not talk about their acting, their missions, and themselves. It is always glad to see and to support any good actor in any good play, but some portion of it certainly has grown to be a little impatient of foreign visitors who come here to dispense instruction in morality by polluting the Stage with didactic or other theatrical sewage: and to such foreign missionaries as happen to be discontented with America the suggestion may not be inappropriate that they would do well to confine their reformatory ministrations to their own countries,—where perhaps they would be appreciated.

If Mr. Irving will present himself and his talented associate, Miss Hackney (Mrs. Irving), on the American Stage in a fine, clean, *dramatic* play, old or new, romantic or literal, he will enjoy bounteous acceptance, and every earnest, honest writer connected with the newspaper press of the country will rejoice to advocate his cause, as well for his own sake as for the sake of his great father's honored memory. Meanwhile it is proper and essential to say that it would have been judicious and in good taste on his part to have refrained

from the covert sneer conveyed in his inquiry: "Is it that Brieux makes *even some citizens of this virtuous republic* feel much as *Hamlet* made *King Claudius* feel? Is it that no branch of the Anglo-Saxon race can endure *the serious debate* and presentation of vital sex questions?" M. Brieux has, obviously, made a deep impression on the mind of Mr. Irving, but it is safe to say that as yet the "citizens of this virtuous republic," so far from having been affected by his pestiferous and dirty prattle, are, for the most part, not aware of his existence; and as to the matter of plays, the branch of "the Anglo-Saxon race" located in this country has for a number of years had ample opportunity to endure in the Theatre, and has endured with amazing patience and to the verge of nausea, such a vast amount of the sickly stuff called "serious debate" on "sex questions,"—"debate" which, in fact, is a reeking compound of mephitic sentimentality, megrimatic twaddle, and rank indecency,—that it has grown utterly weary of the infliction and completely disgusted with the persons who impose it. No auditor in a theatre or anywhere else need feel "as *Hamlet* made *King Claudius* feel,"—like an adulterer and a murderer apprehensive of detection,—in order to resent the superfluous and insolent obtrusion of indelicate or downright nasty topics on the stage. The Theatre is the place for *Drama*, not the place for either "serious debate" or frivolous debate or *any* "debate," and least of all is it the place for

fruitless, didactic "debate" in bald literal terms on the "psychology" of the sexual relation. Difference between black and white is perceptible to the naked eye. Our community is aware, though our theatrical missionary admonitors do not appear to know it, of the difference between right and wrong. We have the Ten Commandments. We have the Sermon on the Mount. We have the precepts of Christ. Who, in Heaven's name, has ever asked *actors* to promulgate platitudes and exhortations on the stage by way of instructing us in our moral duties or enforcing rectification of our moral principles?

The intrusion of "sex questions" in the Theatre is an insult to intelligence and an outrage on decency, and if Mr. Irving pleases to enroll himself with those who cannot or do not choose to recognize that fact, so much the worse for him. Meanwhile this actor troubles himself far too much about criticism and critics. It is not anything written and published against the plays he has produced and purposes to produce that will prevent his obtainment of success. Adverse criticism of a play never caused its failure if that play was pure and if it possessed true merit and could be kept on the stage for two weeks. The force that will cause Mr. Irving's failure with such plays as he has designated is the enlightened opinion of a self-respecting public perceptive of the bad character of the plays that he intends to produce; for, though some of those plays have not yet been acted here, the actor's descrip-

tion of their themes and intimation of their contents sufficiently indicate that the character of them is, in general, bad. We do not want "the dark places." We want the light places. We want beauty, nobility, grandeur, the heroism of human nature, the lovely attributes of human conduct, the incentive to hope, the diffusion of something like happiness, whether the persons presented are ancient heroes or modern hod-carriers, or both. We are weary, beyond sufferance, of ignominy and crime masquerading as Moral Lesson. If Mr. Irving's statement were true,—the statement, namely, that the plays of M. Brieux as described by him are "*an epitome of the whole life of modern France*,"—then, indeed, modern France would be in a deplorable, not to say hopeless, condition; but Mr. Irving, fortunately, is mistaken. France has been very grievously misrepresented by many of the plays that have come out of it.

Mr. Laurence Irving is a man of middle age, highly intelligent, finely educated, able, clever, experienced in his profession, and accomplished, but if his dramatic creed and his sense of moral responsibility to his time are correctly disclosed by his recent professional activities and his recent statements of his views and opinions he certainly is sadly lacking in good judgment and good taste. He might in particular have been expected to know, as an immutable, indisputable fact, that the Theatre, contrary to his assumption, *is*, primarily, a

place of public *entertainment*, although, of course, it is much more than that; and it ought not to be necessary to point out to him, or to anybody else, that this also is true: that the Theatre is a place to which we, as a people, wish to resort in company with our wives, daughters, mothers, sons, sisters, brothers, and sweet-hearts, secure in the knowledge that we shall not there be insulted by tainted frivolity, ribaldry, specious portrayal of vile subjects, the sophistical glossing of vice, or the insolence of didactic "moral" precept tagged upon pictures of infamy and shame.

In discussing the subject of theatrical improprieties much and melancholy ingenuity is exercised by its advocates to justify and commend its presentation. Those advocates are, generally speaking, of two classes: the first, comparatively few in number—to which Mr. Laurence Irving undoubtedly belongs—really believe, however strange it may seem, in the rectitude and beneficence of their ministrations, which, in fact, tend to sully the public mind; and, second, the larger class—representative of the widest divergence of intellectual development,—persons who present decadent drama, frivolous or serious, without the slightest thought of moral impulse or ethical purpose or consideration of consequences. From both classes, when condemned, there proceeds a copious stream of fallacious argument which for many readers,—not all of them inexperienced,—clouds the clear waters of reason just as the inky

exudation from the squid darkens the sea. No person naturally virtuous requires enlightenment as to rectitude of principle and chastity of conduct. No person naturally vicious was ever redeemed from that condition by theatrical presentment of the Frightful Example. Some human beings habitually do wrong with a clear knowledge that it *is* wrong and often with a secret approval of their sins. No bigoted person was ever made tolerant of sin or crime by theatrical exposition of the sufferings consequent upon them. No gentle person ever needs to be told that charity is the greatest of all virtues and that no repentant sinner, least of all a repentant woman, should be scorned. No person visits the Theatre for instruction in ethics, sociology, or hygiene. The innocence which has not yet discovered that "evil communications corrupt good manners" does not visit the Theatre at all. The social conventions,—that afflictive "code of conventional ethics" against which didactic theatrical diatribes are principally directed,—have long been established, and they seem to be the best that can be made. Better ones, at any rate, have not yet been suggested. It is perfectly understood that there are elements of injustice in the social code, especially affecting Woman, but the injustice is that of Nature, not of Man. Moreover, it is not from without, but from within, that heaviest punishment comes upon the awakened sinner: it is the perception of a sacred self violated that causes the anguish and

makes hard the way of the transgressor. Nothing external, least of all the spectacle of a drama, can assuage the agony or lighten the burden.

It is easy to write Decadent Drama and it is very easy to act in it. That is one reason why the public has been afflicted with so much of it. Material for it can be elicited from any police court or almost any daily newspaper or medical journal. Illicit "love," the most frequent theme of these "problem plays," is, in its action and reaction upon character and circumstance, readily operant to create effective dramatic situations, and those situations, displayed with hysteric movement and clamor, readily affect the desultory multitude, excite morbid curiosity, and are often found to be a lucrative theatrical commodity. No spectator was ever benefited by the contemplation of them, and they have done much injury by arousing in the minds of many persons, of both sexes, and especially the young, a morbid, baneful inquisitiveness as to the lives and relationships of rakes and wantons. They naturally tend to propel the imagination toward iniquities and monstrosities; to fill the mind with images of lewd, immoral character and pictures of licentious conduct; to depress the intellect and sadden the heart with an almost despairing sense of human frailty and wickedness, without inspiring even one suggestion of practical palliative value. The glib, complacent amateur critics of life and drama—the juvenile squeak and the sopho-

morical squeal,—are always tremendously moved by them, proclaiming them “strong, virile, and true.” The experienced, judicious publicist sees them with mingled sorrow, anger, and contempt. There is not and there never has been, from any such commentator on either life or the dramatic reflection of life, any protest against the presentment of the facts of human experience,—the compendium, that is to say, of feelings and deeds which Mr. Henry Arthur Jones is supposed to mean by “the Great Realities of Life,”—when that presentment is made with due regard to the obvious and rightful law of wise selection. Some of the greatest plays in our language embody elements of evil, duly restricted to a right perspective. Shakespeare’s *Antony* and *Cleopatra* are persons who could no more be spared from literature than could his *Rosalind* and *Orlando*. Goethe’s *Faust* and *Margaret* are immortal. Goldsmith’s *Olivia* and *Squire Thornhill* are true to life and to art, and no offence is found in their story as it has been set upon the stage. Pity and sympathy are stirred by thought of *Mary Blenkarn* and her weak but true lover. Loathing and abhorrence are inspired in normal minds by the stage presentment of *Hedda Gabler* and *Mr. Lövberg*, the savage *Maldonaldo* and the treacherous wanton, *Mrs. Bellamy*; aversion and contempt are the effects of *Pierre* and *Charlotte*, his “affinity” and “incubus,” and the normal, decent auditor who, seeking a play, accidentally stumbles into their presence feels

as if he had inadvertently blundered upon some stranger's vulgar, dirty little intrigue, murmurs his word of excuse, and hastily retires.

The range of taste which comprehends every proper type of theatrical performance,—a range which is only briefly indicated in the specification of drama extending from "Hamlet" at the one extreme to "The Royal Family" at the other; from "The Harvest Moon" to "The White Pilgrim"; from "The Little Minister" to "The Bells"; from "Nance Oldfield" to "The Man of the Hour"; from "Richelieu" to "The World and His Wife"; from "As You Like It" to "Caste"; from "Virginia" to "The House Next Door"; from "Alabama" to "Faust"; from "What Every Woman Knows" to "The Rivals"; from "King Lear" to "The Messenger from Mars"; from "Seeing Warren" to "The Darling of the Gods"; from "Off the Line" to "Leah Kleschna"; from "Charles I." to "The Admirable Crichton"; from "She Stoops to Conquer" to "Becket"; and from "The Lyons Mail" to "The Witching Hour"—cannot, truthfully, be designated narrow. That range I have always advocated. Our Stage, to some extent always, and to a shameful extent of late years, has been made a dumping-ground for a mess of dramatic impropriety,—serious and frivolous. The abuse has become intolerable and it ought to be stopped. When, in defence of contributions to that defilement, an able and scholarly man, such as Mr. Laurence Irving, seriously asks for approval of a

theatrical "study of free love"; when such a man as Mr. Edward H. Sothern,—an accomplished, sincere, earnest, ambitious actor,—comes before the public with a declaration that he desires to teach people that *love* is "not *altogether* a lascivious and sensual matter"; when a woman of the pure, exemplary private life of Mrs. Kendal will produce "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray"; when that leading impresario Oscar Hammerstein will proclaim "Salome" as one of the most moral works ever presented; when an able, astute publicist and manager, Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske, will produce and praise the coarse and gross "Salvation Nell"; when the directors of the New Theatre will bring forth such plays as "A Son of the People" and the atrocious "The Nigger"; when the ablest producing stage-manager in America, Mr. David Belasco, will try to palliate an outrage on propriety by calling "The Easiest Way" a moral lesson for mothers and daughters, while pretty little Miss Charlotte Walker will publicly announce,—and a newspaper will print the announcement,—that in his plays, of which "The Easiest Way" is one, the people hear "*the voice of God speaking through Mr. Eugene Walter!*"—surely there is great and urgent need for informed, rational, incessant opposition to the degradation of the Stage, opposition making use of every weapon that experience has provided, that ingenuity can invent, and that industry can employ.

XIV.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENT.

"FORGET ME NOT" AND GENEVIEVE WARD.

IN the season of 1880-'81 Genevieve Ward made a remarkably brilliant hit with her embodiment of *Stephanie De Mohrivart*, in the play of "Forget Me Not," by Herman Merivale, and since then she has acted that part all round the world. It was an extraordinary performance—potent with intellectual character, beautiful with refinement, nervous and steel-like with indomitable purpose and icy glitter, intense with passion, painfully true to an afflicting ideal of reality, and at last splendidly tragic: and it was a shining example of ductile and various art. Such a work ought surely to be recorded as one of the great achievements of the Stage. Genevieve Ward showed herself to possess in copious abundance peculiar qualities of power and beauty upon which mainly the part of *Stephanie* is reared. The points of assimilation between the actress and the part were seen to consist of an imperial force of character, intellectual brilliancy, audacity of mind, iron will, perfect elegance of manners, a profound self-knowledge, and unerring intuitions as to the relation of

motive and conduct in that vast network of circumstance which is the social fabric. *Stephanie* possesses all those attributes, and all those attributes Genevieve Ward supplied, with the luxuriant adequacy and grace of nature. But *Stephanie* superadds to those attributes a bitter, mocking cynicism, thinly veiled by artificial suavity and logically irradiant from natural hardness of heart, coupled with an insensibility that has been engendered by cruel experience of human selfishness. This, together with a certain mystical touch of the animal freedom, whether in joy or wrath, that goes with a being having neither soul nor conscience, the actress had to supply—and did supply—by her art. As interpreted by Genevieve Ward the character was reared not upon a basis of unchastity, but upon a basis of intellectual perversion. *Stephanie* has followed—at first with self-contempt, afterward with sullen indifference, finally with the bold and brilliant hardihood of reckless defiance—a life of crime. She is audacious, unscrupulous, cruel; a consummate tactician; almost sexless, yet a siren in knowledge and capacity to use the arts of her sex; capable of any wickedness to accomplish an end, yet trivial enough to have no higher end in view than the reinvestiture of herself with social recognition; cold as snow; implacable as the grave; remorseless; wicked; but, beneath all this depravity, capable of self-pity, capable of momentary regret, capable of a little human tenderness, aware of the glory of the innocence she has lost,



From a Photograph by Vander Wyde. In Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.

GENEVIEVE WARD

as

Stéphanie De Mohrivart, in "Forget Me Not."

and thus not altogether beyond the pale of compassion. And she is, in externals,—in everything visible and audible,—the ideal of grace and melody.

In the presence of an admirable work of art the observer wishes that it were entirely worthy of being performed and that it were entirely clear and sound as to its applicability—in a moral sense, or even in an intellectual sense—to human life. Art does not go far when it stops short at the revelation of the felicitous powers of the artist; and it is not morally sound when it tends to beguile sympathy with an unworthy object and perplex a spectator's perceptions as to good and evil. Genevieve Ward's performance of *Stephanie*, brilliant though it was, did not redeem the character by any intimation of latent goodness. The actress managed, by a scheme of treatment exclusively her own, to make *Stephanie*, for two or three moments, piteous and forlorn; and her expression of that evanescent anguish—occurring in the appeal to *Sir Horace Welby*, her friendly foe, in the strong scene of the Second Act—was wonderfully subtle. That appeal, as Genevieve Ward made it, began in artifice, became profoundly sincere, and then was stunned and startled into a recoil of resentment by a harsh rebuff, whereupon it subsided through hysterical levity into frigid and brittle sarcasm and gay defiance. For a while, accordingly, the feelings of the observer were deeply moved. Yet this did not make the character of

Stephanie less detestable. The blight remains upon it—and always must remain—that it repels all human sympathy. The added blight likewise rests upon it,—though this is a less vital fault,—that it is burdened with moral sophistry. Vicious conduct in a woman, according to *Stephanie's* logic, is not more culpable or disastrous than vicious conduct in a man: the woman, equally with the man, should have a social license to sow the juvenile wild oats and effect the middle-aged reformation; and it is only because there are gay young men who indulge in profligacy that women sometimes become adventurous moral monsters. All this is launched forth in speeches of singular terseness, eloquence, and vigor; but all this is specious and mischievous perversion of the truth—however admirably in character from *Stephanie's* lips. Every observer who has looked carefully upon the world is aware that the consequences of sexual sin by a woman are vastly more pernicious than those of sexual sin by a man; that society could not exist in decency, if to its already inconvenient coterie of “reformed” rakes it were to add a legion of “reformed” wantons; and that it is innate wickedness and evil propensity which make such women as *Stephanie*, and not the mere existence of the wild young men who are willing to become their comrades—and who generally end by being their dupes and victims. It is natural, however, that this evil woman—who has kept a gambling-hell and ruined many a man, soul and

body, and who now wishes to reinstate herself in a virtuous social position—should thus strive to palliate her past proceedings. Self-justification is one of the first laws of life. Even *Iago*, who never deceives himself, yet announces one adequate motive for his fearful crimes. Even Bulwer's *Margrave*—that prodigy of evil, that cardinal type of infernal, joyous, animal depravity—can yet paint himself in the light of harmless loveliness and innocent gayety.

“Forget Me Not” tells a thin story, but its story has been made to yield excellent dramatic pictures, splendid moments of intellectual combat, and affecting contrasts of character. The dialogue, particularly in the Second Act, is as strong and as brilliant as polished steel. In that combat of words Genevieve Ward's acting was delicious with trenchant skill and fascinating variety. The easy, good-natured, bantering air with which the strife began, the liquid purity of the tones, the delicate glow of the arch satire, the icy glitter of the thought and purpose beneath the words, the transition into pathos and back again into gay indifference and deadly hostility, the sudden and terrible mood of menace, when at length the crisis had passed and the evil genius had won its temporary victory—all those were in perfect taste and consummate harmony. Seeing that brilliant, supple, relentless, formidable figure, and hearing that incisive, bell-like voice, the spectator was repelled and attracted at the same instant,

and thoroughly bewildered with the sense of a power and beauty as hateful as they were puissant. It was an image of imperial will, made radiant with beauty and electric with flashes of passion. The leopard and the serpent are fatal, terrible, and loathsome; yet they scarcely have a peer among nature's supreme symbols of power and grace. Into the last scene of "Forget Me Not,"—when at length *Stephanie* is crushed by physical fear, through beholding, unseen by him, the man who would kill her as a malignant and dangerous reptile,—Genevieve Ward introduced such illustrative "business," not provided by the piece, as greatly enhanced the final effect. The backward rush from the door, on seeing the Corsican avenger on the staircase, and therewithal the incidental, involuntary cry of terror, was the invention of the actress: and from that moment to the final exit she was the incarnation of abject fear. The situation is exceptionally strong: the actress invested it with a coloring of pathetic and awful truth.

WILSON BARRETT IN "CLAUDIAN" AND "THE MANXMAN."

The hero of the drama of "Claudian" is a striking character and one in which an actor can create a lively and diversified impression of power, grace, and pathos, of spiritual exaltation, moral sublimity, and simple heroism. The play is not pure melodrama, but partly poetic tragedy; and, since there is no good reason why poetry should

be restricted within the limits of declamation, the fact that it is herein made tributary to sensation does not degrade the rank of the fabric nor lessen its value. A good story is the better for being well told, and a poetic play is the more delightful for being spirited with action, busy with incident, and picturesque with scenic embellishment.

The tragedy of “Claudian” was made for Wilson Barrett by authors who had carefully considered his personal peculiarities and his professional aptitude. The plot was invented and constructed by Henry Herman. The text was written by W. G. Wills. The architecture and the dresses were designed by E. W. Godwin. The scenery was painted by Walter Hann, Stafford Hall, and William Telbin. A part of the incidental music was furnished by Sir Julius Benedict, but the most of it was provided by Edward Jones. “Claudian” had its first representation on December 6, 1883, at the Princess’ Theatre, London. It was first produced in America, at the old Star Theatre, New York, on October 11, 1886. It long kept its place on the stage as a successful play, and it deserves to survive.

The action of “Claudian” begins at Byzantium, in the year 362, and it is continued and concluded at Charydos, in Bithynia, a hundred years afterward. In the year 362 Byzantium (Constantinople) had but recently superseded Rome as the seat of the imperial government of the western Roman Empire, and it was the gayest and

most gorgeous city in the world. Julian "the Apostate," who abjured Christianity and reopened the pagan temples, had been only a year enthroned,—long enough, however, to foster persecution of the Christians. The tone of the place and of the time was carnal, cruel, opulent, luxurious, licentious, yet not unleavened by the softening influence of the Christian faith, and not unshaken by the ominous presage of predestined social convulsion. That background of diversified, glittering magnificence and impending storm was requisite for the superb scenic pictures and the voluptuous and terrific deeds with which the movement of the tragedy is launched. The solemn and awful myth upon which "Claudian" is founded is the ancient story of the Wandering Jew,—Cartaphilus, Josephus, Ahasuerus, or by whatever name he may have been called,—which comes down to modern times from the chronicle of Roger of Wendover. It is a favorite theme with poets and romancers, and in one form or another it has been freely used. It prompted the most startling of the fictions of Eugene Sue; it suggested to Lewis an episode in his crazy "The Monk"; it swayed to the last the imagination of Bulwer-Lytton; it inspired the poet Croly in his fine romance of "Salathiel," when he drew that appalling picture of the Ship of Fire, with its one lonely occupant, careering across the midnight sea, and beheld, over the doomed city of Israel, the glorious vision of the Temple

of Jerusalem crumbling in the heavens. In “Claudian” it is made to assume the investiture of novelty by the association of its central idea with a new set of persons and places, a new motive, and a new catastrophe and consummation.

Claudian, a profligate young noble, having bought, under frightfully cruel circumstances, a slave, who is the wife of a poor sculptor, seizes his prey from beneath the protection of a holy hermit, and stabs to death the saintly old man who would have sheltered and preserved her helpless innocence. The dying hermit pronounces upon *Claudian* the awful doom of everlasting mortal life, of everlasting youth, and of everlasting inability to do good without causing evil. That wretch will thenceforth walk the earth, alone. He is set apart from other men. He can have no friend. He can know no comfort. Death will pass him by, and earth will deny him the refuge of the grave. There is one dark hint given of his possible salvation. A time will come,—and in the culmination of the tragedy it does come,—when, being enraptured with the ecstasy of a pure and perfect love, he can expiate his monstrous sin by the final crucifixion of his soul, and thus, by deliberate choice, obtain the release of death. The play depicts his crime, the beginning of his penance, and the end of it. In the prologue he is the genius of hellish evil,—strong, glittering, baleful, wicked. In the play,—where he reappears as *Claudian Andiates*,—he has become the personifica-

tion of virtuous power and active benevolence. He repeatedly rescues a good and beautiful woman from the vile persecutions of a petty despot, and at length he loves her. That is the hour of his fate. He has taken her to his palace, but an earthquake rends it asunder, leaving him unscathed, and still alone, amid the ruins. At that climax the spirit of the murdered hermit appears before him, among the rifted rocks, and bids him to choose between life and death. He endures the agony of a final struggle to do right. He yields up the one love of his life, and so he enters into rest.

The conditions under which the character of *Claudian* is displayed, though good, are not uniformly propitious for the actor. During the prologue *Claudian* acts. During the subsequent scenes of the tragedy he exists, he suffers, he endures, he is acted upon, he is the cause of action in others, but he no longer stands forth conspicuous as the active agent of all that is done. He is constrained to interest not so much by his deeds as by his condition; nevertheless, for persons who possess imagination, his significance as a dramatic figure is enhanced rather than diminished.

The text of "Claudian" is couched partly in blank verse but mostly in rhythmical prose. Wills, as a poet, possessed a delicate and sonorous diction, a spontaneous and graceful play of fancy, a nimble faculty for the invention of expressive similes, and deep sincerity in the utterance of pathos. His weird passages and his mourn-

ful passages are the best parts of his writing, but all of it is marked by the aristocratic tone of a noble intellect touched with genius. In humor he was less fortunate, and the humorous part of his tragedy, trivial in itself, is rendered tedious by its lack of artistic relevance,—even that of illuminative contrast,—to a grand and terrible theme. It is only too true that in actual life folly shakes its bauble and rings its bell beside the death-bed, that frivolity titters in the face of grief, and that the sound of laughter can often be heard by those who weep. It is true that in tragedy the awe and terror of the most sublime moments can be heightened by suggested contrast with the ordinary ripple and the vacant levity of common life. While *Hamlet* with shuddering, awe-stricken gaze beholds his imperial father's spirit dimly outlined on the freezing midnight air, the *King* is awake within and "takes his rouse." But the purposes of art are not rightly served by the intrusion of comic triviality merely to cause a laugh. In "Claudian" it is sought to diffuse a palliative light of humor by the incidental portraiture of a comic wrangle between a pair of rustic lovers,—the young farmer, *Belos*, and his sweetheart, *Edessa*,—and the forced and needless introduction of that element lessens the majesty of the play. There is abundance of contrasting embellishment without that extraneous adjunct, and it seems strange that so wise a dramatist as Wills did not suppress it from his colleague's plot. Strange

also it certainly is that both those authors should not have guarded against the perilous dramatic error of monotony in *Claudian's* proceedings, subsequent to the Prologue, by a scrupulous avoidance of repetition. There is either poverty of invention or inadvertence of judgment in allowing the hero of a play to do the same thing over and over again.

The integrity of *Almida*,—who ought to be a faultless heroine,—seems a little dubious, in view of her ready transit from a tried, proved, faithful, and accepted lover to the alluring but utterly unknown *Claudian*. Yet it is to be remembered that *Almida* becomes the victim of a supernatural enchantment. Her infatuation is not a guilty one, and it passes away at last. She is in a fine frenzy during its continuance. The imagination must be allowed its license. It seems, at first, a preposterous supposition that the moral government of the universe would permit a human being to walk this world for centuries, diffusing affliction and ruin upon innocent persons all along his track; but it must not be forgotten that the devastators of the human race,—the Neros, the Attilas, the Napoleon Bonapartes,—have been permitted, with quite a colossal liberality, to ravage the world for considerable periods of time. The records of the past clearly show that a prodigal, cruel, wanton waste of human life has been compatible with the moral government of the earth. But *Claudian* is ideal. The theory about him is pre-

mised as unfeignedly fantastic. No man can remain young for a hundred years. This man does; and it is his terrific fate that he shall forever desire to do good but never be able to act upon his desire without causing calamity. In a paroxysm of cruelty, the natural outcome of a bad life, he has done a sacrilegious murder. He must expiate that crime by the most excruciating form of human suffering, and ultimately obtain his redemption by an act of sublime self-sacrifice. The scheme is visionary,—but it is to be viewed with requisite and fair allowance, and it may justly claim to be accepted not for its structure, tested by the prosaic standard of fact, but for its lofty and beautiful meaning, when judged as a poem.

Evil is in the world, is infiltrated through every particle of it, and, seemingly, it is in the world in order that goodness can have something over which to prevail; that nobleness of human character can be developed, and that the scheme of the moral universe can be redeemed from what otherwise would be inevitable, the inane monotony of abject platitude. Moralists, who write the precepts and formulate the rules which ought to govern human life, the operation of which would make human life smooth and pleasant if only they were always successfully followed, are frequently pained to observe that natures originally rich in nobleness seem to go wrong by reason of those very endowments which ought to make them go right. Genius is a divine gift,

and the disastrous fate of genius is proverbial. It has been figuratively said that there is a special Providence even in the fall of a sparrow. It may be incumbent on the moralist to assume that upon natures which contain great powers and possibilities of goodness, yet have been surrendered, in all or in part, to evil, the Providence which chastens all mankind will impose special severities of penance, such as will accomplish an ultimate redemption, in the defeat of evil and the supremacy of good. In order to make the performance of *Claudian* noble the actor must show, by the use of transparency in his art, that the nature of *Claudian* is inherently grand; that his bad life has been a dreadful outrage upon himself, as well as an impious and awful defiance of his Maker, and that his soul is worth the tremendous cost that must be paid for saving it.

Wilson Barrett as *Claudian* conveyed that essential meaning of the part, with subtle intuition and affluent artistic felicity. To the eye, the ear, the imagination there was something in his presence, his voice, and his fine reserve that showed this ideal to be in full possession of him. That was the intrinsic worth of the performance; not so much executive ability as spiritual significance. The world is not deeply concerned with mere professional skill. An actor whose influence does not radiate beyond artistic proficiency can impart nothing of spiritual value,—neither illumination, nor help,



From a Photograph by Sarony.

In the Collection of the Author.

WILSON BARRETT
as
Claudian, in "Claudian."

nor comfort,—to other human souls. This is the perfection of achievement which so many artistic toilers win. An actor, a poet, a painter, a sculptor, may be ever so cultivated, ever so expert, ever so important to himself, but he never is of substantial and abiding importance to others unless he has something to impart, out of the opulent, enkindling vitality of his mind and soul, which can and does enrich their perceptions of truth and beauty, and thus help them in their lives. The attributes in which Wilson Barrett’s performance was deficient were weirdness and pathos. An immortality of misery should write a record on the ravaged face and figure such as cannot be put into words; should sublimate the man, and should make him the more mystical and pathetic because endowed with an immortality of youth. Wilson Barrett was,—at all times,—deficient in appreciation of the supernatural and in a profound knowledge of sorrow.

Every successful actor necessarily possesses certain individual faculties and qualities which have accomplished his success. Wilson Barrett,—partly by natural growth in a congenial direction and partly under the influence of an æsthetic paganism existent in the London of his day,—developed along the line of physical sensuousness in dramatic art. Possessed of a robust, symmetrical, commanding figure, which, nevertheless, lacked height, a strong Roman head, an incisive, penetrating voice, an inveterate power of will, the unconscious

poise and slow deliberateness of strength, an impetuous spirit, strongly tending to the enjoyment of exuberant life, yet curbed by that sense of beauty which revolts at excess, he was a type of those attributes which are admirable in classical subjects. His aspect and personality explained not alone his success in *Claudian*, but the acceptance that he gained in other personations. He seemed an outcome of the revolt against asceticism and excessive intellectuality in art, and as such congenial to the multitude. The defect in his method was a tinge of lachrymose monotony of demeanor, combined with a tendency to preach. When an actor does not possess extraordinary mobility of countenance and extraordinary flexibility of carriage he would be wise to extenuate that lack by striking diversity of action, by a rich and various vocalism, and by brilliancy of style. Wilson Barrett would have animated and illumined the structure of his dramatic art by curbing a propensity toward the assumption of pretty attitudes of physical display, and by moderating a tedious proclivity to exhortation.

“THE MANXMAN.”

The play of “The Manxman,” made by Wilson Barrett, on the basis of a novel by Hall Caine, was presented for the first time in America, on November 26, 1894, at the American Theatre, New York, and Mr. Barrett acted in it as *Pete Quillian*. The novel and the play are incongruous as to moral purpose. The

novel presents simply a picture of "outrageous fortune,"—the horrible injustice that can result, and sometimes doubtless does result, from human treachery, or animal depravity, or moral weakness, or the force of low passions and the insensate cruelty of a hard heart. One of the peculiarities of much contemporaneous fiction is the portraiture of remediless misery, sequent on hideous wrongdoing that apparently prospers and never is punished. This drama, on the contrary, aims to enforce the old lesson of retribution, teaching by picture as well as precept. The discrepancy is not, perhaps, important. The main thing is that a play should be a play,—that it should *move*. Morals can always be trusted to take care of themselves. Wilson Barrett, notwithstanding his bias in favor of declaring obvious Sunday-school truth, succeeded in making a powerful play out of a trite, though touching, story—for nothing could be more essentially trite, for the purposes of the Stage, than the posture of circumstances in which two men, at first being friends, love the same woman; in which one friend betrays the confidence of the other, and in which the woman, either capriciously or from irrational weakness, is hurtful to both. It is the story of a thousand romances, and it is as old as the hills. The dramatist, however, succeeds when he makes old things new by piquant treatment, and that success was achieved by Mr. Barrett. "The Manxman" derives zest from being domiciled in the Isle of Man,—a region

unhackneyed and fruitful of quaintness and color,—but it derives still greater zest from its bold, spirited treatment of human passions and complex conduct.

The topic is painful, but it is one that cannot be ignored. Objection has been made, and ought to be made, to the misuse of it,—to the introduction of it for the wanton purpose of exhibiting vulgarity by means of ethical vivisection; but rational thinkers know the power that appertains to the passion of love and the part which it plays in human affairs. The complications, tragedies, and griefs that flow from its errors and its sins are, naturally, a portion of the material of all literature and all art, because they are a portion of universal experience; but there is a right way of treating them, and there is a wrong way, and the wrong way has, in recent years, been unscrupulously followed, to the serious injury of the Stage and Society. “The Manxman” is not a “problem play.” It presents an example of poignant human suffering resultant from weakness and unintentional sin, but its purpose is pathos, not pollution. It does not expatiate on disease. Its obvious moral lesson is emphasized with a paltry insistence,—as if it were necessary to puncture yourself with a pin in order to ascertain that pins have points,—but it is clean in purpose. It does not portray vice for the sake of vice, and it does not load the mind with filth, and thus it provides a striking contrast with such pretentious and obnoxious stuff as “The Case of

Rebellious Susan" and "The Masqueraders." It contains story, character, incident, and situation, and it is calculated to ennoble the observer's mind by showing a type of human greatness amidst adversity, and by touching the springs of human pity. The situations in Act Third are reminiscent of those in "Belphégor" and "Arrah-na-Pogue," but those in Act Fourth are original, and they are dramatically effective, in the highest degree. The letter expedient is a stroke of genius. In the scene of the mother's return to her child the play culminates. The incidents of the story are deftly employed to show the manner in which the knowledge of a great, terrible, and deplorable wrong was brought home to the victim of it, and the sublime patience with which he bore his grief.

In heroic and also in domestic drama Wilson Barrett was one of the most accomplished and successful actors of his time. His drift was neither imaginative nor spiritual, and therefore his performances were not always sympathetic to those auditors requiring weirdness of atmosphere, high intellectuality, and graces of a poetic ideal; but he was distinctively human, actively sympathetic with the elemental traits of everyday character and the common, usual joys and sorrows of mankind. His best successes were gained in simple types of manliness, combining rugged strength with tender feeling, and in plays of a homelike texture and a didactic trend. Some men are born to moralize, and

throughout all the acting of Wilson Barrett there was the note of the preacher. He sympathized with the Hermit of Nithside, and perfectly interpreted such strong, earnest, gentle themes as moved the genius of the poet Crabbe,—“Nature’s sternest painter, yet the best.” In the hero of “The Manxman” he found a character with which his spirit was completely harmonious, he put forth all his powers, and he was seen to great advantage. The spirit of the part is the spirit of *Enoch Arden*. The image that the actor presented was that of a man in an humble position of social life,—a rude, unlettered, simple sailor,—whose nature is all goodness, and who, under bitter trial, cruel injustice, and overwhelming grief, instinctively aims,—after the first wild impulse of natural resentment,—to bear all sorrows with patience, and to treat all persons with magnanimous consideration and sweet and gentle charity. The impersonation given by Wilson Barrett, picturesque in aspect, expeditious in action, vital with feeling, potent by reason of sincerity, and delightful because of novel traits and external embellishments,—fresh, characteristic, and harmonious with the part,—was one of equal power and beauty, the power of simple truth and the beauty of well-considered and effective art. It benefited those persons who saw it,—because it touched their hearts and because it strengthened in their minds that instinctive belief in heroism and goodness, which

dwells at the basis of human nature and which is the only sure foundation of social life. Miss Maud Jeffries, a tall, picturesque person, remarkable for her sensibility and nervous force, impersonated the heroine, who is more a woman than a character, and the more difficult to interpret for that reason. Her acting in the earlier scenes was marked by piquant charm, in the later scenes by the passionate emotion of self-conflict—for the woman wishes to do right, and is irresistibly impelled to do wrong.

"THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY."

Pinero's drama of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was first produced at the St. James's Theatre, London, on May 27, 1893, by the comedian George Alexander—Mrs. Patrick Campbell appearing as its calorific and distressed heroine and Alexander as the fool who weds her. The first presentation of it in America was made by Mr. and Mrs. William H. Kendal, at the old Star Theatre, New York, on October 9, 1893. That play has had an extensive, unmerited, hurtful, and deplorable prosperity, on both sides of the Atlantic. In America it has been presented far and wide by various female "stars" and by many "stock" companies. The names most conspicuously associated with it are those of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Mrs. W. H. Kendal, and Miss Olga Nethersole. The claims that have been made for it, upon ethical as well as theatrical grounds,

are not less astonishing than absurd. It was, for example, declared by Professor Phelps, of Yale University, to be "the greatest play of modern times," and it has been extolled by innumerable public voices as the vehicle of one of "the greatest of moral lessons." Such an encomium as that of the Yale professor, uttered *ex cathedra*, prompts a desire to know exactly how familiar the maker of it is with the drama, either of modern or of ancient times,—and likewise what may happen to be his standard of "greatness." The advocacy of the play on ethical grounds is so shallow as to be both impudent and pitiable. "Tanqueray" is one of the most vulgar and offensive plays that have been placed on the stage in our time; it has exercised a mischievous influence upon the taste, the judgment, and the moral sense of the community, and it has been distressingly efficacious in causing and facilitating pollution of the silver stream of pure dramatic literature.

The story of the play is vile; the moral significance of it commonplace; and it is debilitated by the radical weakness of a strenuous didacticism. It possesses, however, dramatic values in the shape of effective situations which adroit constructive skill has deduced from consideration of the pressure of experience on character. *Paula*, the second *Mrs. Tanqueray*, a handsome virago, ill-bred, ill-tempered, unprincipled, self-willed, and quarrelsome, is a woman who has, several times, become a mistress before at last she becomes

a wife. *Tanqueray* is a fat-witted Englishman who exhibits a combination, common enough in life, of sentimentality and sensuality. Both are devoid of self-respect, and both are vitiated by that insensate selfishness which makes some persons indifferent to everything except their own gratification. *Mr. Tanqueray* is a widower, with a marriageable daughter—resident in a French convent. He has, in his first marital venture, been married to a woman who was "cold": one of his friends says of her, "She died of a fever, and that I verily believe is the only time in her life when she was warm." In his second venture *Mr. Tanqueray* is determined to marry a woman who is "warm"—and he therefore selects one who has dwelt on terms of illicit intimacy with several of his acquaintances. Having married her, he retires, with his new wife and his daughter, to a country house, where the three dwell, for a considerable time, in ignominious discomfort. At last, because of iterated quarrels, manifold infelicities, and imminent danger that her husband will discover that an accepted suitor for his daughter's hand is one of the antecedent paramours of his second wife, *Paula* escapes through that dark portal of egress provided for so much human failure and misery,—suicide.

The theatrical presentation of that posture of domestic conditions is an exposure of something which has no legitimate place in the Theatre. A work of dramatic art should not undertake to inculcate morals.

The moral element is present in all things, and in art it can, therefore, be left to take care of itself. Its natural drift will regulate and apply its moral influence in a work of art. The artistic sense naturally sides with *Sir Peter Teazle*, and earnestly re-echoes his admirable, if peppery, exclamation, "Damn your sentiment!"

None of the presentments of Pinero's super-heated heroine has been remarkable for dramatic art. Mrs. Kendal, not a woman of impulse, and distinctly antipathetic to the *Mrs. Tanqueray* temperament, gave an embodiment of that distressed female as sincere as she could make it, but it did not carry conviction. It was a thoroughly good theoretical portrayal of distracted wretchedness: it was no more. But the spectacle of the British Matron, the proclaimed personification of all the Domestic Virtues, performing as a female rake, technically expert as it was, could scarcely be expected to touch the heart. Some things can be viewed with composure, and, saving a mild wonder that she should do it at all, Mrs. Kendal's performance of *Mrs. Tanqueray* was one of them. She was at her best in the expression of that peculiar form of spite which women sometimes intend in satirically polite or openly impertinent encounters with each other. The miasmatic atmosphere of the first American personation of "Tanqueray" was a little relieved by the dignity, sincerity, and tenderness of Mr. Kendal, in his treatment of *Tanqueray's*

appeal to *Paula's* better nature. Perhaps the most notable incident of the first performance was the introduction to the American stage of that capital comedian, J. E. Dodson, who acted *Cayley Drummle*.

The effulgent glory of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's personation of the harlot-wife was not revealed to the American public until December 30, 1901, when she acted *Paula* at Powers' Theatre, Chicago. On January 16, 1902, Mrs. Campbell burst upon the vision of theatrical New York, at the Republic Theatre. Her embodiment of *Mrs. Tanqueray* was consistent and harmonious—a distinct ideal clearly expressed: but the ideal was commonplace and the expression of it did not,—except at one point, the portrayal of utter, wandering desolation at the last,—rise above the level of competent mediocrity. The tall and opulent figure of the actress was gorgeous with fine raiment, and, entering sympathetically into the emotional perturbations of a mind that wavers between passion and conscience, she was able to give free and effective scope to her impulsive, excitable temperament, and her nervous, restless manner. The unpleasantly frank motive of the experimental *Tanqueray's* governing reason in selecting a woman for the vacant position of helpmate in his household was, at least, made fully intelligible by Mrs. Campbell's aspect and demeanor. She revealed herself as an eccentricity, but, in her wild way, she possessed charm. Her denotement of a wayward, passionate

nature, bitterly resentful of an adverse fate as well as of domestic restrictions, and in cynical revolt against social conventions, was measurably effective,—manifesting a true instinct of that lawless freedom which, whether in humanity or nature, when combined with beauty, is always attractive. Her utterances of velvet mockery and ill-bred insolence were particularly pungent and effective; and at the climax, when *Mrs. Tanqueray's* old lover, *Hugh Ardale*, has turned up, and her step-daughter's "happiness" (with that other reformed profligate) is at stake, and the relentless Nemesis of sin calls aloud for its prey, she momentarily rose to a high pitch of dramatic abandonment. The defects of her performance were hollowness and artifice,—showing themselves in silly, kittenish affectation and saccharine excess of elderly blandishments,—and an assiduously sibilant elocution.

In considering the ethical quality of this play one of the principal difficulties encountered is that, according to some of its admiring exponents, it may mean so many different things. I have been assured from time to time (and with a not unwelcome asperity) that I have not understood the drift of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray": possibly that is true—but I doubt it. Still, when a dramatist undertakes to portray the possible relations between a prostitute and a noodle, as they impinge upon decent society, he enters a somewhat dubious field, where all observers are not always

able to follow him. Pinero's play may mean that, under some circumstances, a woman who has led an unchaste life may, nevertheless, be worthy to become the wife of a reputable man. Or it may mean that a marriage between a reputable man and an approved wanton is always unwise and will always end in disaster. Or it may mean that a woman who has done wrong by disregarding the conventions of society is as much entitled to rehabilitation and social re-establishment as a man is who has done the same thing. Or it may mean that marriages between weak-minded men who mistake desire for affection and profligate women who have temporarily reformed *do* occur, and *do* cause mischief. It may, or it may not, carry a whole freight train-load of morals, or immorals. The particular point of view taken of it does not signify—but you cannot force that truth home to the Theatrical Moralists. Moral Conditions in America have given cause for grave uneasiness to many worthy theatrical reformers. They must, accordingly, derive great comfort from reflecting that Father Pinero and the theatrical Sisters of Mercy are attentive to those conditions. The “Tanqueray” tract and the preachments from it have been described as “strong.” So, undoubtedly, they are—and so is the odor of a guano barge. But that does not matter. The main thing, to them, is the “lesson,” and surely no “lesson” is so much needed—whether by our youths or our widowers—as the “lesson” that, after all,

it is an error deliberately to select a wife from the demi-monde. Such selection is, of course, frequently made, and the male population always repairs to theatrical-missionary revivals, such as performances of Pinero's "Tanqueray," when about to enter into wedlock. Moreover, our mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, and sweet-hearts are always edified by contemplation of the tribulations that beset this delightful creature, *Mrs. Tanqueray*. Nothing is so necessary for them as to realize (and practically to apply the realization) that the woman who has lived a vicious life of carnal gratification is as much entitled to social respect and position (when she has tired of her vicious life and "chucked it") as the woman is who, living in honor, dignifies existence, ennobles human nature, and makes possible organized society. Before the advent of Father Pinero it had not, of course, been suspected that the attitude of society toward the Erring Sister was frequently unjust—because of the inscrutable injustice of Nature. No one, either, had ever suspected that the Erring Brother is as bad as the Erring Sister; the fact that he is often much worse had never occurred to anybody. The Old Rounder, who, as is well known, always camps on the trail of these theatrical revivalists, stands in dire need of instruction as to "social problems," and, equally of course, when the moral impartment is being made you could not keep him out of their theatres with a shotgun! There is much cause for rejoicing.

Nothing is as much needed by that hardened person as graphic "teaching" that, when he has been left lamenting by the demise of Number One, he really ought not to select as Number Two a female who has qualified for matrimony by "keeping house" for several of his male associates!

The ground of objection against "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and against all such plays, though it does not seem to be perceived by the votaries of Decadent Drama, ought to be readily comprehensible, even to elemental intelligence. Persons who have a "moral" to inculcate often appear to suppose that they have a clear and perfect right to over-ride refinement and delicacy and to affront good taste to any and every extent; and, accordingly,—sometimes with the best intentions,—they make themselves intolerably obnoxious. It is as though a missionary were to spit tobacco juice into your eyes in order to "teach" you that the habit of chewing tobacco is a filthy one. The notion that a Moralist, because he *is* a Moralist, may create a stench whenever and wherever he pleases is an arrogant and impudent assumption which ought to cease. "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" is a rank offence against good taste and good manners, absolutely trite in its "teaching," and diffusive of nothing but shame, dejection, and disgust. Its excellences as a dramatic composition have been many times proclaimed as prodigious. Those excellences,—without being at all unusual, in the period of Westland

Marston, T. W. Robertson, W. S. Gilbert, Herman Merivale, W. G. Wills, Henry Arthur Jones, and Sidney Grundy,—are considerable: but, even though they were as colossal as the everlasting hills, they would not redeem a fabric that is vulgar in subject, depressing and disheartening in moral influence, and utterly useless in practical effect. There *is* depravity in human nature, and there *are* dark and dreadful facts in human experience; but the exploitation of those matters, in a work of art, can be justified only,—if at all,—by the final impartment of some practical help, some positive good, some permanent benefit, to mankind. The dramatist who merely shows his photograph of evil is only the scavenger who drops his load of garbage and drives away.

Of course, it is only an old fogey, prejudiced in favor of beauty, nobility, simplicity, loveliness,—a person so out of date as to love the Theatre and the Art of Acting, and to wish to leave a dramatic performance cheered and refreshed by contemplation of splendid achievement,—who would presume to utter objection to these pious labors. The idea that certain performers—such as Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Miss Olga Nethersole, Miss Mary Shaw, Miss Virginia Harned, and Mrs. Leslie Carter—being unable to attract remunerative attention by theatrical presentation of pure, fine plays and admirable acting, have been, on occasion,

willing to attract it after the fashion of Voltaire's celebrated monkey, is only the brutal notion of a fading old carper who, as announced by Mr. Hall Caine, "ought to be disvoiced"—because he *will* persist in expressing his judgments and giving the reasons for them. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal were the first to see that the salvation of America depended on the presentation here of Father Pinero's Sermon (not to mention their perception of the numerous dollars that might be gathered from the congregations), and, forthwith, they sailed for our benighted land. Brother Kendal was met as he strolled down the steamer's gang-plank, with the Pinero "Lesson" under his arm, and was asked if the play "is really a good one." "You remind me," he said, "of the apothecary who was asked if his pills were really good pills, and who replied: 'Of course they are!—*I'm* selling them.'" Brother Kendal may have erred as to the worth of Father Pinero's product, but there is no doubt that it is "a pill"!

"THE CHRISTIAN" AND VIOLA ALLEN.

When that excellent actress Viola Allen made her first appearance in New York as a star she came forth, at the Knickerbocker Theatre, on October 10, 1898, and impersonated *Glory Quayle*, in a play by the English novelist Hall Caine, ostensibly founded on his novel called "The Christian," and, accomplishing a difficult task in a creditable manner, she gained auspi-

cious public favor with an inchoate character and an almost impracticable play. The public, however, derived no material benefit from Mr. Caine's drama, for it proved to be only a loose, inadequate, ineffective synopsis of his novel. It revealed an essayist insisting that, being an essayist, he was also a dramatist, and a moralist declaring that doctrines and precepts are the synonyms of situations and action. The province of fiction,—so Mr. Caine declared,—is to present a thought in the form of a story. There could not be a greater error. The province of fiction is to tell a tale. The thought, the moral, the didactic element, will always take care of itself, and it always should be left to do so. Those authors who write novels and make plays for the purpose of teaching lessons, inculcating truths, revolutionizing society, and reforming mankind, become tedious, and therein they measurably defeat their purpose. Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Hall Caine are types of that class,—their works, while full of ability, being also full of weariness. They belong to the family of Tracts: they preach; and the preachments announce themselves as novels. Mr. Caine's "Christian" contains, indeed, some of the elements of a story,—for it contains characters and incidents, and it shows, however spasmodically, the movement of many lives, against a background of social system, but it is overwhelmed by didacticism, it breaks the bounds equally of reason and symmetry,

as a work of art, and it insists so strenuously on "rubbing in" its trite and obvious moral that, practically, it comes at last to be only a treatise on sociology.

Mr. Caine, in his novel and in his drama, signified his conviction that things are in a bad way in the city of London; that England needs apostles; that the Established Church ought to be disestablished; that the hungry poor ought to be fed; that women are often shamefully treated by men; that society is wickedly cruel toward the female sinner and hypocritically lenient toward her masculine paramour; that something ought immediately to be done, to rectify this wrong, and that there is urgent need of reformatory legislation. All this is, substantially, true, but all this might better be said in Exeter Hall or in Parliament than in either a novel or a play. It is wrong and useless to endeavor to convert either the field of Fiction or the field of the Stage into a forum for the discussion of social problems. No theatrical audience can be found that will long endure the Moral Bore. That experiment has been tried, over and over again, and it has always failed. A play that preaches is a play that *as a play* will perish, however it may survive as a polemic, whereas a real play,—which shows a moving picture of interesting life, and commends it to the imagination and the genial feelings by delicate exaggeration and by humor and brilliancy,—contains the elements of perpetuity. "The Rivals," which was first acted more than a hundred years

ago, is acted now, and a hundred years from now it, probably, will still be acted. Everybody knows that there is a frightful amount of evil in society. One of those wise old Hebrews who wrote and constructed the Jewish Bible has noticed that the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Shakespeare has remarked that "In the corrupted currents of this world Offence's gilded hand may shove by Justice." Some clergymen are hypocrites. Some men are libertines. Even some of the Sisters are not as angelic as they might be. But nobody reads a novel or attends a theatre for the purpose of a lecture on Civil Government, Religious Organization, Puseyism, the Oxford Movement, Butler's "Analogy," the question of Celibacy in the Priesthood, or the Regeneration of the Human Race. Things of that kind have their place, and moralists will always discuss them: nothing is more astonishing than the confidence that amiable and enthusiastic reformers display in the efficacy of making statutes and passing resolutions: but the place for those things is not the Stage.

Mr. Caine's play differs somewhat from Mr. Caine's novel. The author did not try to reproduce all his didacticism, but he remained didactic. The theme of the drama is the love of a man and a woman, as affected by religious enthusiasm on the one hand, and, transiently, by waywardness and vanity on the other. The man is *John Storm*, a young clergyman, who

wishes to reform the world, and the woman is *Glory Quayle*, a young woman from the Isle of Man, who goes to London to seek her fortune, first as a hospital nurse, and subsequently as a music-hall player. In actual life those persons would have reached an understanding far more readily than they are permitted to do in either the novel or the play, and without passing through nearly as much tribulation as their author has allotted to them. *Storm* is young, strong, sincere, self-centred, devout, and passionate. He loves a beautiful girl, and also he loves his religious duty. The religious duty impels him in one way, while the beautiful girl draws him, still more strongly, in another. *Glory Quayle* is exuberant, wayward, and capricious, intoxicated with the novelty of her adventurous city life, and headstrong with the sense of conscious beauty and power. *Storm* tries, for a while, to persuade himself that he can live without love and without the woman whom he worships. *Glory Quayle* tries, for a while, to persuade herself that popularity, flirtation, and "a good time" in general will enable her to dispense with the man whom she loves,—as long as she can keep him dangling behind her. At the last they are reconciled, and the young Manxwoman discards the gay world, and devotes herself, in a submissive, Christian spirit, to love and duty. There is not much left of the novel when the polemics are taken out of it, but Mr. Caine, in his drama, strenuously insisted on declaring that duty

is a fine thing, and that "the course of true love never did run smooth."

Viola Allen seemed not to have formed a distinct ideal of the character of *Glory Quayle*, but the ambiguity of the actress was not remarkable, in view of the ambiguity of the author,—for *Glory Quayle* is not distinctly depicted, either in the play or in the book. The physical image that the author appears to have had in his mind seems to have been prompted by remembrance of Miss Ellen Terry. *Glory Quayle* is "more than common tall" and has magnificent golden hair and exceedingly large gray eyes, in one of which there is a brown spot; and she is possessed of a voice that can grow deep and delicious, so as to wile even a bear out of his winter quarters. Miss Allen, although, in a different style, she possesses a beauty of her own, could not correspond to that description, and neither did she suggest a temperament as unstable as water, or a mind as volatile as a puff of wind. The girl represented by her was now one thing and now another, but in so far as she was clearly anything she was a sensuous, coquettish, capricious young woman, tempting a man and playing with him, but suddenly revealing, at last, moral principle and a solid fibre of character. It would be difficult to match that ideal with anything in life. In the book the portraiture of *Glory Quayle* defies every standard of probability that ever was erected,—for her letters, which are numerous, are not the letters of a

girl, but those of an accomplished old hand at the literary bellows, perfectly acquainted with the ways of the world, particularly clever in satirical “digs” at society, and specially eager to show his cleverness; and the constant wonder is that a young woman so wise in mind and so piquant in wit should be so utterly foolish in conduct. Mr. Caine might visit the Corinthian Club of London, but no girl capable of writing those letters would ever have gone there, or ever have gone to supper in *Mr. Drake’s* chambers. Neither would any woman, after the avowal which occurs between *Glory Quayle* and *Storm* in the fourteenth section of Mr. Caine’s third book of “The Christian,” ever have broken her word. It is a bold man who speaks positively about female human nature, but there are a few truths as to that subject which have been ascertained, and one of them is that when once a woman has actually and finally given her heart she is as true as heaven. Some years ago there was a novelist in England capable of giving important hints to even the wisest of his brethren. His name was Wilkie Collins, and this is one of the truths that he declared: “The growth of the better nature in woman is perfected by love. Love is religion, in women. It opens their hearts to all that is good for them, and it acts independently of the conditions of human happiness.”

The adroit precision with which the author of “The Christian” culled, for reproduction in his play, the

most telling points in his story was found to be the chief merit of mechanism in the fabric of the drama. The denunciation of *Lord Ure* was made to provide one opportunity for *Storm*, and the fanatic's delirious attempt to kill *Glory Quayle*, in order to save her soul, was made to afford an opportunity to both. It is a pity that Shakespeare, in writing the Fifth Act of "Othello," should so far have preceded Mr. Caine, not only in the felicity of a dramatic situation but in the assignment of an adequate motive for it: those old writers are continually obstructing the manifestations of modern genius. Miss Allen was not less powerful than lovely in her passionate appeal to the crazy lover's saving remembrance of the past, and she was exceedingly felicitous and touching in a condition of hysterical excitement, when rejecting him.

Edward Morgan presented *Storm*. It would be difficult for an actor to impersonate that over-conscientious and supersensitive ecclesiastic in such a way as to commend him to sympathy. The actor, in this case, assumed a sour, forbidding countenance, a harsh voice, and that stony manner which is thought, on the contemporary stage, to evince intense emotion and sublime austerity, and by those means he successfully embodied one of those disturbing and distressing moralists who think that the whole angelic host is agitated when any one of them happens to have a pain



From a Photograph.

In the Collection of the Author.

VIOLA ALLEN

as

Glory Quayle, in "The Christian."

in his stomach. When a lover has reached the condition in which he wishes to slaughter the object of his love in order to save her soul the time has come for putting him not into a work of art, but into a strait-jacket. A religious enthusiast who has not got beyond carnal temptation has not travelled very far. The reader has only to contrast *John Storm* with Scott's *Balfour of Burley*, or with *Gerard* in Reade's "The Cloister and the Hearth," to see what a shadow he is, in presence of the grim reality.

“IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHOSE OX IS GORED.”

The curious experience through which a dramatic critic must pass who ventures to express his convictions about the plays and acting that he sees, without heed of the way in which those convictions may impress authors and actors, is instructively indicated by the following correspondence.

A few days prior to the New York production of Mr. Caine's play of "The Christian" Mr. Ripley Hitchcock was so kind as to forward to me the following extract from a letter written by the distinguished English novelist:

“I should like very much to tell Mr. Winter how fine,—how very fine,—I thought his criticism on ‘Cyrano’ was. Nothing half so good has been said on that subject, much as it has been discussed. The motif of the Drama is appraised at its absolute

value, and the whole estimate is the *fairest*, the *justest*, the most *exactly right*.

"As you know, the central incident of the play is one which has occupied my own mind a good deal. I have dealt with the unrequited lover in two books, and even the machinery of the letters, etc., I have employed. Therefore, I think I ought to know the height and depth of the passion depicted. It is a very beautiful and touching passion, but *Cyrano* does not reach the full height of it, or go down to the full depth. Mr. Winter sees this as no other critic seems to have seen it. In *Sydney Carton*, for example, the thing reaches a far, far finer development. And then, the unworthiness of the woman, her shallowness, her lightness, take enormously from the power of the motive. To see this passion of self-sacrifice at its height and depth, the woman must be a noble creature, the other man must be noble, and the only tragic mischief must be destiny—the mysterious law of human love.

"While so much silly talk is heard it is delightful to realize that the art of criticism still lives. If I knew Mr. Winter well enough I would say this to himself."

A few days after the publication of my views of "The Christian" Mr. Caine favored the Public with the following:

"THE CHRISTIAN' AND ITS CRITICS."

"I am asked by many friends and well-wishers if the motive of 'The Christian' has not been grievously misunderstood in some quarters. My answer may be direct and emphatic and it need not be very long. The public has not misunderstood the motive of the play. When people pay for seats in a theatre and go there to be entertained they are in an honest frame of mind, and it is easy to make them understand. The people who pay for their seats at the Knickerbocker Theatre understand 'The Christian.'

"But the people who go there because they must, because going to the theatre is their every-day work, may, or may not, be in an honest frame of mind. They may be tired of all theatres and all plays, weary of all entertainment, sick of all labor, stupid and soured and disappointed. Under such conditions it is not only easy for a man to misunderstand the motive of a play,—there is a perpetual temptation to him to do so. Then, if he is old and worn, if he has seen much labor, if his ideals are rooted in the past, if his own life has yielded no results adequate to his gifts, it is not only hard for him to be generous, it gives him a great deal of trouble to be just and honest.

"Such appears to be the case, in a few instances, with the writers who have claimed to find 'The Christian' an unchristian play. One of these writers tells his readers that the fanatic who has not got beyond carnal temptation has not gone very far. There is only one way to deal with a statement like this, and that is, to brand it at once, as a deliberate and palpable misstatement. There is no carnality in the relations of *John Storm* and *Glory Quayle*. There is no excuse for saying there exists anywhere so much as the suggestion of carnality, and the critic who makes the statement ought to be dis-voiced. *He is not an honest man, and he knows it.*

"A religious enthusiast built on the lines of the early Christians, counting the body as nothing and the soul as all in all, conceives the idea that a girl whom he loves is being demoralized by association with certain men. He tries to rescue her from ruin, and she will not be rescued. Then a Voice seems to come to him from heaven: 'Save her at all costs. She is tottering on the brink of hell. Better a life ended than a life degraded and a soul destroyed.' He resolves to kill her body that he may save her soul.

"Now this is a resolution coming out of the very heart of spiritual love and religious enthusiasm. It has inspired the righteous fanatic a thousand times. The history of religious persecution is full of this incident. You may find it in the Bible. You may hear its echo in the words of St. Paul: 'Deliver him up to Satan for the destruction of the body that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord.'

"The man goes to the girl's rooms, on this errand. The girl fights for her life and saves it. How? By the sacrifice of her virtue?

There is not the remotest suggestion of such an outrage on art and decency. The scene of her struggle is the last illustration of the purity of her character.

"She meets the man on his own terms. He loves her: that is the first fact. His love is the root of his fanaticism. She conquers his spiritual frenzy by an appeal to his human affections. One by one she brings back the memories of their happy and innocent childhood; tells him of the days when they played and sang and rowed together; says she dreams of herself as she used to be in those dear old times. Now that she is a famous actress [!!!!] she sometimes gets herself up on the stage in the jersey and stocking-cap of earlier days, and in the middle of a scene she bursts out crying.

"The human chord is touched, but the man struggles to hold on to his fanatical purpose. 'Why do you remind me of those days?' he says. 'Is it only to make me realize the change in you?' 'Am I so much changed?' she answers, and to show him she is the same as ever, and it is only the surroundings of her person and her life that are different, she tears down her hair from its knot, that it may fall on to her shoulders like the hair of a young girl, and drags away the lace from her neck that her dress may resemble her girlish jersey.

" 'Look at me,' she cries. 'Am I not the same as ever?' In other words, 'Isn't this she whom you loved when she was an innocent girl and you were a happy boy, and no evil thoughts of the world and the flesh and the devil had come between us?' The woman conquers. Spiritual frenzy gives place to human love. The man in the man triumphs. The fanatic in the man fails.

"Thus far the incident was made to go in the novel, and at that point, for artistic reasons which seemed to me sufficient, the incident ended. Even then there was no excuse for hurtful interpretations, but there was, at least, a plausible explanation of them. In the play there is no excuse and no honest explanation, either, for any hurtful interpretation whatever. On the top of the climax *Storm* is torn from *Glory's* arms and turned into the street, and the evil machine of the play, intruding himself into the woman's room with the expectation of surprising her in her lover's arms, finds her on her knees praying for his protection.

"I need go no farther. The people who see 'The Christian' don't

need this exposition of the motive of its central incident, but for those who do not go to theatres, and for those who might stay away from fear of an unchristian illustration of Christian character, I have, with extreme reluctance and deep personal regret, taken this unusual means of defeating the purposes of what I am sorry to call a most hurtful and *intentional falsehood*.

“HALL CAINE.”

“REPLY.”—1.

The “one” literary sinner specifically indicated in the above statement is the hideous miscreant who writes this paragraph. In his deplorable condition of age, decrepitude, penury, cynicism, stupidity, and universal disgust it is, of course, hard for him to be generous and well-nigh impossible for him to be just or honest. But if this miserable being, feebly tottering on the confines of irretrievable ignominy, might be allowed to summon the lingering relics of his ancient candor, he would like to say that never for one instant did the thought which Mr. Caine has ascribed to him come into his mind; that never for one moment did he even dream of imputing a low, bad, or in any way unworthy motive either to Mr. Caine, or to *Mr. John Storm*, the hero of Mr. Caine’s novel and play. Malign, and venomous, and abandoned as this senile creature knows himself to be, he would have been horrified at such a thought, and he is frankly astonished at such an imputation. When he wrote that “a religious enthusiast who has not got beyond carnal temptation has not travelled very far,” all in the world that he meant to say was that,—speaking generally, and with reference to a class of persons and a representative mental and physical condition,—an ascetic devotee who is still capable of being in love with a woman has not made much progress on the road to asceticism. The remark had no intentional reference whatever to Mr. Caine’s modern paraphrase of the sacrificial scene in “*Othello*,” but was a mere philosophic comment on the ingredients of fanatical char-

acter. A finer phrase than "carnal temptation" might, perhaps, have been selected with which to designate man's love,—although such phraseology would, probably, have been indorsed by both Saint Anthony and Saint Augustine, the principal historic ecclesiastical sufferers from that complaint; but it is not every writer who possesses Mr. Hall Caine's exquisite felicity in the choice of language—a felicity which seems to be associated with great sweetness of temper, lovely refinement of style, and a most urbane and benevolent tolerance, even for an old and worn wretch who, as he dodders into the evening twilight of a misspent life, is actually able to gaze upon the play of "The Christian" without being paralyzed with admiration.

WILLIAM WINTER.

2.—"OUR CHRISTIAN FRIEND HALL CAINE."

"To the Editor:

"Sir: It lately pleased Mr. Hall Caine, writing in your paper, to defend his play of 'The Christian' from an aspersion that had never been cast upon it, and, incidentally, to accuse me of dishonesty, calumny, and intentional falsehood. It also pleased Mr. Caine, while designating me as old, poor, impecunious, fossilized, and stupid, to recommend my discharge from my present employment. 'He ought to be disvoiced,' said Mr. Caine; 'he is not an honest man, and he knows it.'

"This remark was rather more than the 'Reproof Valiant'; in fact, it was the 'Countercheck Quarrelsome.' But persons who consider themselves celestially commissioned to reform their neighbors usually take a wide latitude as to their parts of speech, and, in immediate response to Mr. Caine's accusation, I was content to make it clear that he had written in excessive wrath, and without any ground whatever, aside from his mistaken fancy, on which to base his grievance or justify his insolent language.

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"Some time has passed since the publication of Mr. Caine's statement and of my reply to it, but I do not hear that Mr. Caine has said a word of regret for his uncouth ebullition of folly and abuse. Having assumed the attitude of an impudent vilifier, he is, apparently, willing to remain on exhibition in that character. Each to his choice. Mr. Caine registers himself as a blathering rhapsodist, flatulent with the wind of doctrine and giddy with self-conceit. It was long ago observed by *Launcelot Gobbo* that 'this making of Christians will raise the price of hogs': Mr. Caine's conduct shows that it can also raise the animal himself.

"WILLIAM WINTER.

"Fort Hill, New Brighton, Staten Island, Oct. 21, 1898."

"THE CHILDREN OF THE GHETTO."

In Israel Zangwill's novel called "The Children of the Ghetto," an elaborate, discursive portrayal of the domestic life of the Jews in the London Ghetto, much instruction is provided as to the manners and customs of his exiled, wandering race. The author has assembled a series of episodes of the experience of various Jewish families and of individual Jews,—these episodes being thinly connected, or not connected at all, by a strain of narrative which is sometimes sprightly, oftener prolix and ponderous, and invariably and consistently fitful and erratic. A book more difficult to read has seldom been written, and yet it is a book which contains much truth and one that is worthy of study. The description of "the Hyamses' Honeymoon" and the description of the death of little *Benjamin Ansell*, if they had been written

by Charles Dickens, would have been hailed as exceptional achievements of characterization and pathos. Such conversations as the bellicose colloquies between *Mrs. Isaacs* and *Mrs. Jacobs*, quarrelling over their offspring, or the domestic dialogues at the *Phillips* banquet, or the interchange of belligerent epithets at *Sugarman's* feast, and such distinctive and well-drawn characters as the old gypsy, *Malka Birnbaum*, with her symbolical clothes-brush; the lone, fanatical scholar, *Joseph Strelitski*, and the irrepressible and intolerable poet, *Melchitzedek Pinchas*, are true to actual life,—revealing at once a faculty of keen observation and a rare talent for literal statement. The reader is as much wearied by Mr. Zangwill's faithful account of those Jewish family parties and persons as he would be if he were constrained to associate with them, in their congenial atmosphere of fried fish. The prosy fidelity of the book is dreadful. Epigrammatic vivacity, Mr. Zangwill's predominant characteristic when he speaks, seems almost entirely to desert him when he writes. Traces of it, indeed, do occasionally appear, as when he says, of a versatile character, "There was nothing he could not do badly"; or, of a formalist in ritualism, that "a man is not half bad who does three-fourths of his duty"; or, of a dreary female scribbler, that "she wrote domestic novels to prove that she had no sense of humor"; or, of the "modern schools," that "they get rid of the old beliefs, but cannot give up the

old names"; or, of certain disciples, that "They squeeze the teaching of the Master in their own mental moulds, and are ready to die for the distortion"; or, of the perversity of human malice, that "while the Old Testament has no reference to a future existence, the poor Jew has no more been able to live without the hope of Hell than the poor Christian." But those flashes are sporadic and infrequent. For the most part, the chronicle is one of exceedingly small beer, and in the matter of form it follows Disraeli's abrupt and whimsical method of fugacious memoranda, with but little of Disraeli's pungency and with nothing of his wisdom, his sad irony, or his emotional depth. That form is unsymmetrical, and Mr. Zangwill's style in this work, whether from immaturity or lack of clarity and polish, is sluggish. It is about as far removed from drama as any work of fiction could be, yet it was selected as the basis of a play, and that play, after representations in Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, was brought out in New York, on October 16, 1899, at the Herald Square Theatre.

In the play that the novelist has founded on his book, although it is redundant with needless incidents, prolix in language, and unmercifully tedious in the exposition of the commonplace of actual and very stupid life, Mr. Zangwill has been more direct and explicit. The story that he had to tell is mainly that of a girl's temptation to elope with her lover, and to marry, against her

father's will; of her mental struggle between love and duty; and of her ultimate triumph over her amatory inclination. Her name was *Hannah Jacobs*. She was the daughter of the *Rev. Samuel Jacobs*, called *Reb Shemuel*. Her lover's name was *David Brandon*, and she was as devotedly fond of him as he was of her. Their course of true love was just beginning to run smooth, and it might have continued to run smooth, even to the nuptial altar, but for the interposition of a clumsy joke. At a festival called "Pidyun Haben" a frolicsome Jew, named *Sam Levine*, who had bought a wedding ring for his sweetheart, *Leah*, undertook to tease *Leah* by forcibly seizing the right hand of *Hannah Jacobs* and putting the ring on her forefinger, exclaiming as he did so, "Behold, thou art consecrated unto me by this ring, according to the Law of Moses and Israel." This horseplay, in the presence of witnesses, was found to have constituted a genuine marriage. *Hannah Jacobs* was obliged to obtain a divorce, which is called "Gett." "If you play with fire," said her reverend father, "you must expect to be scorched." That proved to be sadly true, for immediately that the question arose of a marriage between *Hannah Jacobs* and *David Brandon* it was announced, by *Hannah's* father, speaking as a rabbi, that *David* was "a Cohen,"—that is to say, a member of the Jewish aristocracy, or priesthood of the Temple,—and that marriage between "a Cohen" and a divorced woman is forbidden by the sacred Jewish

Law: "Neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband, for he is holy unto his God." After that the strife in the young woman's heart began. No situation could be more cruel; none could seem more ridiculous. Her resolution to elope with her willing and eager lover,—who had no scruples whatever,—was soon taken; her preparations were made; but, at the last moment, her filial affection and her sense of religious duty prevailed over her impulses of passion and of selfish purpose, and she renounced her lover and remained with her parents.

In Southern climes it oftens happens that a tree is so thickly draped with pendant moss that it cannot be distinctly seen. The dramatic skeleton or framework of Mr. Zangwill's play was found to be almost completely hidden by the mosses of Judaism. Those trappings might, or might not, be interesting, according to an observer's taste or mood. Divested of racial embroidery, the posture of circumstances displayed by the drama was not, in any particular, either dramatic or impressive. The only point of variance from trite conventionality was the girl's final decision to stay with her father. In actual life persons who wish to get married commonly take their own headstrong way, regardless of any afflicting consequences that they are likely to bring upon either themselves or others. Rational conduct on the part of an infatuated lover, whether male or female, may well strike the observer

into "amazement and admiration." Mr. Zangwill's heroine demonstrated that claim to respect, but it could not have been expected that such an example of self-abnegation would attract sympathy, seeing that the popular doctrine, established and overwhelming, is "All for love, or the world well lost." In Wills's beautiful drama "*Olivia*" (a play which, notwithstanding the weakness in its last act, once seen could never be forgotten!) there is a wonderfully fine scene showing first *Olivia's* pathetic farewell to her home, and then the cruel, agonizing climax of her flight from her father's protection. The highest invention in Mr. Zangwill's play was seen to be merely a variation of that theme, ending with a reversal of the consequent effect. There was abundant faithful portrayal of Jewish manners and customs: but Action, not Portraiture, is the soul of all Drama, and "tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes." Nothing more tedious could well be devised than the long-drawn ceremony of Jewish divorce. It was said of the rhymester Fitzgerald that when he celebrated the Phoenix he described every feather on its body. As a playwright (for he is in no sense a dramatist) Mr. Zangwill revealed himself as not far astern of that model. There was, however, enough of singularity in subject, cleverness in dialogue, pictorial excellence in scenery, and sincerity in portions of the acting, combined with the ever popular element of mobs, banners,

bass-drums, precocious children, and silly clowns, to make the play temporarily tolerable: but it could not be accepted as a symmetrical or charming work of art or as an authentic portrayal of sympathetic human nature. There was a delicate love scene in Act Second, and there was a sweet and tender moment of confidence between father and daughter in Act Third, and that was about the sum of essential merit of the composition. The loquacious bard, *Pinchas*, and *Simon Wolf*, with his vociferous gabble and his noisy mob, proved excrescent, and so did a multitude of green-grocers, free-thinkers, pipe-smokers, and idiotic carpenters. There was far too much of the ponderous ecclesiastic, *Reb Shemuel*.

Miss Blanche Bates, an actress of deep sensibility, a sweet and fine temperament, beautiful personal appearance, and uncommon capacity for dramatic expression, impersonated the heroine. It was not difficult for her to represent a young woman of noble mind, high spirit, ardent affections, and sound moral principles. Those phrases sufficiently denote the character of *Hannah Jacobs*,—not a dramatic person, and not required to participate in any exigency of strong action essentially dramatic. For her, and for her lover and her father, the dramatist had framed and written one scene of passionate conflict,—the scene in which the Levitical ordinance against the marriage was declared, and in which the impetuous feelings of the betrothed lovers

were evoked in opposition to the pious will of the Rabbi. In that scene the acting of Miss Bates, representative of a fervent yet conscientious spirit torn by varying impulses, was dignified and vitalized with splendid excitement, and, alike in utterance and demeanor, was indicative of unusual command of the resources not alone of feeling but of that excellent art which, while it holds passion in perfect restraint, makes it seem absolutely spontaneous and gives to it the wings of the tempest and the reckless force of the gale. Frank Worthing, likewise, as *David Brandon*, rose to a fine height of diversified emotion, at this juncture, and he expressed with nature and with power the scorn and the bitterness of an honest mind and a good heart revolting against injustice and indignant against cold formalism and the flummery of antiquated laws.

AN AMERICAN ECCENTRICITY—W. H. CRANE IN
"DAVID HARUM."

"The Rough Diamond," in one form or another, has been shown a thousand times, and in almost every form it is tiresome. On the occasion of the presentment of it, by the able and accomplished eccentric comedian William H. Crane, who brought it forth in the autumn of 1900, at the Garrick Theatre, New York, under the name of *David Harum*, that "eternal jewel" took the form of an uncouth bucolic eccentricity, a bald-headed rural banker with a small wart on his

face and a large heart in his bosom, whose pleasure it was, while willing to be considered an old curmudgeon, to overreach and discomfit unscrupulous competitors, befriend merit, remember a past injury and a past kindness, and requite them both, and, in one instance,—acting partly from native good nature and partly from a desire to shine in his own eyes,—to rescue the oppressed, and to do good more or less by stealth. This paragon of subterranean benevolence was manifested as an inhabitant of a country town, over which he predominated by virtue of his ready money, his shrewdness in bargains, his inerrant knowledge of every being in the neighborhood, his aptitude for gulling tricksters while preserving a guileless exterior, his jocular humor, and his expeditious enterprise. It was made known that he had emerged from the afflictive condition of an ill-treated and wretched boyhood, and, through toilsome industry and a quick use of acute business faculties, had obtained a competence. He was then displayed in a concatenation of commonplace incidents,—incidents as monotonous and undramatic as the disconvolution of thread from a spool,—as contriving to advance the fortunes of a young man to whom he had taken a fancy, and as pouring affluence upon the indigent widow of a deceased benefactor, a person who had treated him kindly when a boy. Mr. Crane embodied him with much austere homeliness of aspect, with strenuous “realism” of deportment,—“realism” being Mr. Crane’s

infirmity as a comedian,—and with exuberance of effusive energy.

The praiseworthy conduct of *David Harum*, contrasted with his pristine crudeness and raw manners, was the theme of the play, and the intimation conveyed by it was that it is noble for a rich man to remember persons who were good to him when he was poor, and to be thoughtfully generous in the bestowal of such benefits as can ensue from the judicious diffusion of his wealth. That is not a novel or momentous proposition, and, left to itself, it might not cause amazement. By way of enforcing its significance, therefore, it was assumed that this procedure must elicit a rapture of sympathy, if only ascribed to an illiterate countryman whose countenance is adorned with hatpegs, who eats with his knife, and who is easily competent to circumvent a sharper in trading for a horse. Such an assumption was essential, but, unhappily, ineffective. In actual life there have been many men who have aided meritorious youth and relieved the sufferings of the worthy poor, and this they have done modestly and simply, without eccentricity or circumlocution or fanfaronade of magnanimity. The conduct of Edmund Burke toward young George Crabbe, the conduct of Lord Houghton toward young David Gray, the conduct of Samuel Rogers in various instances, might be cited as typical of many such courses of benevolence, shown in the right spirit and the right way. Practical goodness

of this kind, in fact, has been, and is, more common than a proper appreciation of it. Being common, it is not striking, and neither does it become striking through being associated with eccentric characteristics in the person of its exponent. As a subsidiary and incidental character, in a genuine play,—by which is meant a fabric of action, incident, and dialogue that tells a coherent and effective story in a dramatic manner,—the grotesque individuality of *David Harum*, redeemed by innate kindness and gayly apparelled with the outward flourishes of humor, might be made to supply an element of agreeable fun. As the central figure in a drama he is preposterous, because he is out of all proportion—a pygmy set upon a monument, and made absurd by inappropriate prominence.

In the fable associated with *David Harum* there was no story. A youth and a maid who love each other were accidentally and temporarily parted, and, in the course of their absence from each other, the youth became acquainted with *David Harum* and entered into his service,—thus, in time, becoming aware of some of his affairs and many of his peculiarities. After a period of rural observation and trial the youth and the maid were restored to each other and consigned to matrimonial bliss. The interlude was all. A few quizzical touches in the narrative and a few whimsical traits in the central character, combined with a gentle vein of waggy in the style and with involuntary intima-

tions of amiable temperament and playful disposition on the part of the writer, made up the sum of merit in the book on which the play was founded. Nothing could stand at a further remove from even the semblance of drama. The novel of "David Harum" does not contain a play, and, accordingly, it was not possible that a play should be derived out of it. But it contains a character, and that character—which is not exceptional,—attracted much public attention. The whole of Western New York, indeed, seemed to be populous with claimants for the honor of having been the original of the portrait. The adapters of the novel, Messrs. R. and M. W. Hitchcock, made a sort of diegesis of it. The course of the movement was slightly changed. *John Lennox* became *Harum's* clerk. *Mary Blake* became a school teacher in *Harum's* town. The lovers were kept asunder by poverty. *Harum* mystified them for a time by pretending to be a niggardly brute (the pretence being flimsy and transparent), but finally he delighted them by revealing himself as a benevolent man. Other persons meandered in and trickled out; a rill of domestic sentiment, in the dialogue, was kept flowing over a mush of commonplace occurrences in the action; and the "Americanism" of the concoction was duly certified by ejaculations of "darn," "by thunder," "dum," and "tu hum," together with all the rest of the excruciating syntax never encountered anywhere except in the "American" drama.



From a Photograph by Byron.

In the Collection of the Author.

WILLIAM H. CRANE

as

David Harum, in "David Harum."

In a book,—since the reader can lay it down when tired of it,—a little of *David Harum* might be endured. In actual life men of the *David Harum* class, while now and then amusing, are, for the most part, insufferable. Their eccentricity may, occasionally, be laughable,—but their uncouth manners are tedious, their conceit, always colossal, is repulsive, and their boorish self-assertion is a continual annoyance. They are blatantly egotistical; their talk is always about themselves; they admire nothing so much as “smartness” and “cuteness”; and they make life commonplace for all around them by their everlasting monotonous application, to all things and all persons, of the puny standards of their jocose humor and their sordid, grinding, pettifogging business method. That old cynic Henry Clapp, Jr. (a man who, with all his faults, was a hundred times more able and interesting than many men who have scorned and disparaged him since he died), aptly indicated the character of the *David Harum* breed in his designation of Horace Greeley as “a Self-Made Man who worships his Creator.”

Mr. Crane has an exceptionally strong personality, manifesting itself in marked individual traits. He moves with great rapidity; he is liberal with “mugging,” profuse with gesticulation, and abundantly and continuously vociferous, and he labors for “effects” until industry becomes exhausted and observant solicitude is weary. He exudes strenuous geniality, and, in his

graphic development of character, he gives,—like Washington Irving's "stout gentleman," in the story,—conspicuous prominence to the end which last goes over the wall. Many a time have those attributes been exhibited. They were all visible in his impersonation of *David Harum*. He took great pains with the "make-up," in order to present a facsimile of the novelist's description of *Harum*, and therein he showed his tendency to lay the greater emphasis on the body rather than the spirit. In a photographic point of view the result was excellent,—the eccentricities of the person being made indicative of those of the mind. It was a round, coherent, truthful, amusing personation; a fine study of a coarse subject. It was not comparable, however, with Mr. Crane's noble performance, given in 1896, of old *Cunningham*, in "Fortune's Fool." In that embodiment Mr. Crane was not only the humorist, but the comedian; in that he interpreted a representative experience, touched the heart, asserted the authority of intellect, and manifested the imagination to conceive and the power to fill an ideal of sympathetic humanity. In "David Harum" he was a comic old churl, outwardly harsh, inwardly amiable, "coming out strong" for Number One, and making the most that can be made of brusque eccentricity and humorous sapience. He succeeded,—but it was only in adding one more eccentric figure to a group that was already sufficiently large.

"IRIS."—"THE GREAT REALITIES OF MODERN LIFE."

In 1896, according to the eminent dramatist Henry Arthur Jones, a "Movement" which had then been for some time in progress "to treat the Great Realities of Modern Life upon the Stage" was "scotched," "gagged," or otherwise obstructed, needing some of those remedial aids that are pertinently suggested by *Macbeth*; but it was not absolutely stopped. Various resolute dramatists, according to the testimony of that diligent laborer in the vineyard of moral suasion, had been "sweating" in its service, and he declared that they would continue to "sweat,"—in the sanguine, not to say humid, belief that, sooner or later, through a liberal expenditure of perspiration it would again get started. That belief was eventually justified,—mainly through the fervid industry of Arthur Wing Pinero, the chief sweater of the whole devoted band. Pinero's "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" had reanimated the "Movement," in 1893, and a fresh impetus was given to it by his particularly rancid play of "Iris," which was first presented on the American Stage, at the Criterion Theatre, New York, on September 23, 1901, by that fervid friend of sweat and morality, Mr. Charles Frohman.

The "Great Realities of Modern Life," it appears, are courtesans and blackguards, sexual passions and sexual crimes, infidelities both in the state of marriage

and out of it, and a general stew of bestiality and corruption. Those "great realities" extend through all classes of society, dominate all worldly affairs, and overshadow and control everything. There is no goodness in human nature; there is no honesty in human life; there is no virtue in woman; there is no honor in man. "All places that the eye of Heaven visits" reek with iniquity. Hereditary disease has afflicted everybody, and the human race is merely "a pestilent congregation" of moral lepers. These being the facts, it is the province of the "Movement," by means of the acted drama, to edify this race of vipers with an everlasting panoramic photograph of human depravity and filth—"to hold as 'twere the mirror up to Nature"; with the understanding that "Nature" is a cesspool, and that there is nothing in the world so "virile," so "true," so ecstatically delightful, and so fraught with exemplary precept for its inhabitants as a literal reproduction of that typical emblem. Thus loom the Great Realities and thus shows the Movement, refracted through the mist of many dramas.

In "Iris" the "great realities of our modern life" are a demirep, an ass, and a blackguard—*Iris Bellamy*, *Lawrence Trentwith*, and *Frederick Maldonaldo*. *Iris Bellamy* is a young widow, who, from her deceased husband, has inherited an ample fortune, which she can hold only as long as she remains single, and with which she cannot, under any circumstances, persuade herself

to part. *Trentwith* is impecunious, but *Maldonaldo* is rich. Both those men “loye” *Iris*, and both propose marriage to her. Her love responds to *Trentwith*, but her avarice prefers *Maldonaldo*; it is a case of Cupidity against Cupid. In this dilemma she first accepts *Maldonaldo*; then rejects him: and finally compromises by becoming *Trentwith’s* paramour, pending the happy day when he shall have made a fortune in America, and she can be married to him without incurring the dreaded blight of poverty. That blight, however, suddenly comes upon her, through the dishonesty of her business agent, and she is left with barely a pittance: yet, even so, she declines to marry *Trentwith*, and this donkey departs from her, to seek for wealth. Then, of course, the opulent *Maldonaldo* appears, with plenty of money, and *Iris* becomes his mistress. In due time *Trentwith* returns, to find his former paramour in her sin and shame with another man, to express his amazement at this astounding posture of affairs, and, notwithstanding her fervid assurances of devoted fidelity, to repudiate and repel her. At last *Maldonaldo* discovers the state of her affections, and that he has been only playing second fiddle, and in a frenzy of jealous rage,—deporting himself like the brutal and loathsome ruffian that he is,—he kicks her into the street and then smashes her furniture. That, in substance, is the play; a play in which there is not a single character worthy of respect; a play in which persons talk

and act as if there were no such thing as moral principle or physical purity, and as if they were living in a society bereft alike of virtue, decency, and common sense. Worse compounds of libertinism and carnality have, unhappily, more than once been seen on the stage; but no compound of those ingredients quite as pretentious in form, or quite as specious in its pretension, had been exhibited: for *Iris*, with her beauty, her impulse, her passion, her vacuity of principle, her flabby character, and all the rest of her baleful freight of weakness and sin, is the crystallization of those multitudinous beings who make most of the trouble in the world, the great company of erotic and vicious Fools.

It is always said, in extenuation of the offence of dramas of this kind, that they teach "a lesson." Perhaps they do. But it is invariably a trite and trivial "lesson" and completely superfluous. Fire will burn. Be virtuous and you will be happy. Twice two is four. That is the substance of the "lesson." "In the name of the Prophet—Figs!" Dramas of the "*Iris*" order are not presented because of any moral impulse or with any ethical purpose. Amateur critics of life and of the Stage are always tremendously moved by them, declaring them to be "strong." So, in a certain sense, they are; but so is an onion or a polecat. The true motive of all such plays is sordid, shopkeeping craft, and the actual influence of all of them is the sophistication of reason, the defilement of morality, and the perversion

of taste. They operate upon the mind very much as bad water operates upon the body: in both cases the result is disease.

The publicist who takes this view of this subject is, of course, stigmatized as the Victim of Moral Hysterics. That is a part of the game, and a necessary part of it. The hysterics, however, are really all on the other side. To any man who knows the world the play of "Iris" is not only dirty but dull. Nothing in it rises above the level of a Jardin Mabille intrigue or a bar-room row. Its portrayal of vice is not even moderately novel. There is no genius,—there is not even audacity,—in the making of a group of scamps and fools around a weak, senseless, perverse, misguided, ill-regulated, no-principled woman. The thing is commonplace and tedious. The depiction of a Cyprian in her amatory trouble wearies a sane judgment even more than it offends. There is not, and there never has been, on the part of any judicious critic of life, any objection to the presentment of a dissolute man or an unchaste woman, in due perspective, in a drama. All depends upon the way in which the personality is presented and the use that is made of it.

Pinero's types of "love" are cheap and tawdry, and when you have passed an evening with them you long for a shower bath and a disinfectant. That clever playwright, indeed, has grafted his scenes together in a skilful manner, so as to bring down each curtain on

a telling incident, and he has garnished them with terse, cynical, ironical dialogues, and closed his drama at a sharp climax. But his professional dexterity is not remarkable: Pinero was once an actor, and he has thoroughly learned his art: the stage owes fine things to him, and society has recognized and rewarded them. His art, however, is not in the least marvellous. He is far from being a deep thinker: he is not comparable, as a dramatist, with either Gilbert or Merivale, for imagination, passion, pathos, or humor; and if his play of "Iris" is, in any sense, shocking to the moralist of experienced mind, it only is so because it shows how sadly an able man can misuse his talents, under the mistaken notion that he is showing intellectual power and emancipating the Stage from the fetters of convention, when he disdains the restraints of artistic propriety and defies the laws of taste,—laws which prescribe not squeamishness, not timidity, not hypocrisy, not cowardice, but dignity, refinement, and decent reticence, in treating the baser passions of mankind. Persons who think that the private life and painful experience of a demirep (for that is the true name for it, putting all sophistry aside) constitute a fit subject to be set forth in a work of art, and considered and canvassed by a theatrical audience, will accept and commend such plays as "Iris." On the other hand, there are extant believers in something better, persons who think that the province of art is the ministration of beauty; that

the first principle of art is selection; that "Nature" is not synonymous with garbage; and that the need of society, at every turn, is a prospect of loveliness that cheers, of happiness that delights, of goodness that encourages, of sweetness that refines, and of the nobility to be emulated rather than the depravity to be shunned. By those believers,—“poor remains of friends,”—such plays are and always will be condemned. “Iris” was a discredit to its able author, a disgrace to good literature, and a blight on the stage.

For histrionic purposes *Iris* is a good part,—being that of an ardent, impetuous, nervous, capricious, volatile woman, living exclusively in the senses, and continually wildly driven to and fro by conflicting impulses and emotions. In the scenes adroitly provided for her display there is abundant opportunity for her to vibrate between antagonistic feelings; to vacillate between rival lovers; to tremble in convulsions of passion; and to dissolve in floods of woe. The part was played by Miss Virginia Harned, an actress of conventional method and, apparently, of somewhat splenetic temperament, who made a measurably effective use of her opportunity, displaying the personality without impressing it; making it known without making it felt. That result often ensues when the emotion of a part exceeds that of a player. *Iris* is all tremor; never intellectual, never rational, never sensible; a woman who hovers between

sentiment and hysteria; framed to bring trouble on herself and everybody else. Acted at the best, she might be pitiable. Miss Harned made her moderately interesting.

There was nothing remarkable in the acting of Mr. Oscar Ashe, an English actor, who appeared as *Maldonaldo*. The part presents no difficulties, being merely that of a sensual brute, whose aspect and manners are thinly veneered with superficial polish, and who lives for pleasure. This animal is frequently encountered in actual life, and he has long been a familiar figure on the stage. The ill employment upon which the dramatist has set him in the play of "Iris" is the seduction of a weak, frivolous, unprincipled, helpless woman, a crime congenial with his propensities and readily perpetrated. The actor has to be burly, jocund, aggressive, crafty, sensual, common, mean, and furious. His course is straight, and it ends in a vulgar, noisy explosion. Anybody can play *Maldonaldo* who can play anything. Mr. Ashe played it well, especially in the moments of lewdness, arrogant self-complacency and craft, and in the crash of the final catastrophe. Stress was laid upon the momentous fact that the actor had been specially "imported" for this achievement. It seems a pity that a respectable gentleman should be constrained to make himself publicly odious, and it was hoped that Mr. Ashe,—who thoroughly fulfilled his professional duty as *Maldonaldo*,—would have occasion



From a Photograph by Byron.

VIRGINIA HARNED

as

Iris Bellamy,

in "Iris."

In the Collection of the Author.

OSCAR ASHE

as

Frederick Maldonaldo,

to manifest his talents in something above the level of a swine. That, as yet (1912), he has not done; at least, not in America.

"THE THIEF."

Henri Bernstein's comedy called "The Thief," adapted in English by Haddon Chambers, was produced at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, on September 9, 1908. It is a work of rare merit and remarkable significance, and the performance of it was exceptionally good. The title of it is not appropriate, for the reason that it does not indicate the subject. That subject,—one of supreme importance to society,—is the love existent between married persons; the persons, that is to say, by whom society mainly is constituted and sustained. That love, the love existent in the marital relation, a common topic of satirical and sometimes ribald levity, is the basis on which the entire social fabric rests; yet nothing is, customarily, so foolishly, so deplorably treated by the mass of persons who should reverence and guard it. The man or woman who possesses affection,—however little, so that it be real,—possesses the greatest blessing that life can receive; yet, in general, nothing is so little valued. Every day, almost every hour, men and women alienate it by abuse or barter it from motives of vanity. A cynical writer long ago remarked that in every case of love there is one person who loves and another who submits to be loved.

That, unhappily, is, almost always, true. Often it happens that the moment a woman becomes sure that a man loves her (and Nature has provided her with an unerring instinct by which she inevitably knows) she begins to become indifferent to him. Often it happens that the moment a man knows that he is loved by a woman (and, commonly, he is slow in absorbing that knowledge) he feels that the situation is exactly what it ought to be and that her homage is well bestowed, and he gazes around for other votaries. That is not the invariable occurrence, but that is the custom,—the reason being that, in both sexes, vanity is generally the strongest of all the passions of human nature.

In the comedy of "The Thief" the wife's love for the husband is idolatrous, and in her forlorn, pitiable, wretched dread that she will lose his love,—which indeed seems more condescending than passionate,—she becomes actually a monomaniac, and she steals money with which to pay for pretty raiment intended to make herself more attractive in his eyes. The theory of passionate devotion is pushed to its fullest extent, but those observers who think that such love is impossible know but little about mankind. It is not only possible, it is of frequent occurrence, and the social philosopher is unwise who does not include it in his philosophy. Much is suggested by the play of "The Thief,"—to persons, that is, who possess receptive minds. The elaboration of the plot,—the

process of unravelment by which the culprit is discovered,—is not so important as is its meaning. The acute analyst can perceive, in a moment, the secret of the fable. The development of the plot, indeed, is remarkably adroit, creating anxious suspense and maintaining unbroken interest; but the substance of the play is its disclosure of the human heart,—the access of suffering, the conflict of passions, the revelation of elemental nature. The play does not preach: it only reflects, as in a mirror, the truth of what we are and what we feel. There are, in the mechanism, technical defects. The heroine is represented as, radically, virtuous, and it is not probable that a good woman who idolizes her husband would, out of either tolerant amiability or the vain liking for admiration, temporize, as *Mrs. Voysin* is made to do, with the infatuated youth who besets her with his attentions. It is certain that the husband would be more prompt than *Mr. Voysin* is made to be in arriving at knowledge of the truth that his wife had tolerated those attentions. The eyes of love are sharp, and even the male animal has intuitions: besides, particular care has been taken by the dramatist to intimate that *Mr. Voysin* has had considerable and instructive experience of woman and her ways. Those postulates of circumstance, however, are essential to the fabric of the story, and certainly, in the stormy, afflicting scene of the wife's confession to her husband, when, little by little, the prospect of her

enforced and miserable scheme of deceit has dawned upon him, the sudden irruption of jealous rage, as a controlling motive, is exceedingly felicitous and effective.

Two or three allusions in the text (in particular young *Lagarde's* reference to the chorus girl) should have been expunged. They pass comparatively unnoticed, yet the play would be better without them. The ultimate impartment of it remains unchanged,—an impartment as to the sanctity of affection. Love, like opportunity, is an angel that comes but once, and when it comes it ought to be prized and cherished above everything else. Not all the riches of the world can buy it or keep it, and when once it has gone it never will return. Most of the domestic tragedies with which society abounds ensue from woman's vanity and man's complacent conceit,—the love of admiration on the one hand and the pride of conquest on the other. Public life is populous with individuals,—authors, actors, preachers, statesmen, and the like,—who have sacrificed all that is really precious in human life for the mere mockery of affection, and often for the applause of proletarians, newspaper puffery, and the vapor called fame. "Oh, what a fool I have been," said Charles Churchill, Byron's "meteor of a season," when on his deathbed. There are thousands of persons in a position to say the same despairing words, at the same awful crisis, when memory looks backward as the curtain is about to fall.

This is the story: *Raymonde Lagardes* and *Richard Voysin*, stanch good fellows, were intimate friends. *Raymonde* was the elder, and he had been twice married,—his first wife having died, leaving to him a son, *Fernande*. *Raymonde* was living with his second wife, *Isabelle*, and his son, *Fernande*, at a rural villa in France, and there, in wealth and luxury, he was entertaining, as guests, his cherished friend, *Richard Voysin*, and *Richard's* newly married wife, *Marie Louise*, persons who were, comparatively, poor. *Fernande Lagardes* was a youth of about nineteen years, and unhappily he had fallen in love with *Mrs. Voysin*. A robbery of considerable money, the property of *Isabelle*, had occurred in the house, and *Raymonde* had employed a detective officer, *M. Zambault*, who was present as a guest, bearing an assumed name, to find the thief. After a time *M. Zambault* stated that he had discovered the culprit and was ready to make his report. *Raymonde* then explained the situation to *Mr.* and *Mrs. Voysin*. The report of the detective specified *Fernande* as the thief and presented evidence apparently conclusive of the truth of the accusation. The robbery had, in fact, been committed by *Mrs. Voysin*, who was harassed with private debts, contracted for the purchase of costly apparel, and who, in a moment of peril and temptation, had thus degraded herself. *Mrs. Voysin* was dispatched to summon *Fernande*, and when the youth came he at once admitted the commission of the

crime, made no denial of any charge, and produced a portion of the stolen money—*Mrs. Voysin* having appealed to him and given the money into his keeping. Later in the night, after *Mr. and Mrs. Voysin* had retired to their chamber, a colloquy ensued between them, in which *Richard*, perplexed in thinking of the promptitude of *Fernande's* admission and of the improbability of his guilt, at last, accidentally, stumbled on the truth, and then, through a series of incidents artfully arranged and disposed, compelled his wife to confess her guilt and explain her conduct. The next day *Raymonde* announced that *Fernande* would be sent to South America, there to remain for several years and there to reinstate himself as an honest man. Meanwhile *Voysin*, aware that his wife had, at least, tolerated certain silly amatory advances made by *Fernande*, and being momentarily maddened with suspicion and jealousy, held his peace for a while, and subjected her to the test of witnessing the anguish of *Raymonde*, in parting from his innocent son. That test she could not endure. The truth was spoken by her, the boy was vindicated: and then, in a scene of striking contrasts and deep, natural emotion, *Voysin* depicted to his old friend *Raymonde* the half insane and wholly miserable delusion and the dreadful dilemma of his wife, implying forgiveness of her fault and arranging for their departure to another land and their entrance upon a life of rational love and peace.

The chief parts in "The Thief" were acted by Kyrle Bellew and Margaret Illington. Mr. Bellew (1845-1911), much of whose acting had impressed observation as shallow and vapid, the trivial display of a vain person pleased with himself and prone to stand before the characters he had undertaken to embody, revealed unexpected power. There was, indeed, a tone of superficiality about his demeanor in those passages that involve endearments and an air of kindly, soothing tolerance; but in the scenes that are fraught with almost tragic feeling he rose to a surprising height of passionate sincerity. Nothing could be better than his impetuous, fiery outburst of jealousy when, at last, the whole truth of the wife's folly as well as her crime comes upon *Voysin's* mind; while his treatment of the closing scene, in its simplicity and tender pathos, was as nearly perfect as anything can be. His demeanor in the subjection of the wife to a final test of her integrity, the cold, stern aspect while the tortured heart and almost distracted mind within are distinctly shown, and then the sweet, earnest, lovely delivery of the explanation to *Voysin's* old comrade, *Raymonde*, were achievements in the art of acting that marked Mr. Bellew as an artist of subtlety, skill, and eminent worth.

Miss Margaret Illington's impersonation of *Mrs. Voysin* was fraught with sincerity, sympathy, and force. The actress showed that she had formed a distinct ideal, and she expressed that ideal in such a way as to main-

tain an illusion. The situations in which *Mrs. Voysin* is placed largely contribute to the creation of effect upon the feelings of the spectator, but the actress supplied a continuity of performance that enforced the effect. A slight impediment in her speech constrained her to an obvious effort of articulation, and, especially in the denotement of passionate anguish, it led to some contortion of the face. The peculiarly exacting passages in the part of *Mrs. Voysin* are those in which the guilty woman, in the midnight colloquy with her husband, strives to maintain an appearance of ease and gayety and later makes her confession. It is essential that an actress should indicate,—not to her interlocutor on the scene, but to her audience,—that beneath her guise of gayety she is suffering with terrible apprehension and remorse; and, in the making of her confession of theft, which is bitterly shameful, she ought not to be glib. The confession is torn from her heart, and it should struggle through her utterance. Fluency of speech, apparent sequence of thought, ingenuity of reasoning are expedients to be avoided. Sincere feeling, in situations of agony, does not find facile utterance. There is an instructive stage tradition relative to Edmund Kean, that when he spoke the curse of *Brutus* upon *Tarquin* he seemed to rend it out of his throat as well as out of his heart.



From a Photograph in the Collection of the Author.

KYRLE BELLEW

as

Richard Voysin, in "The Thief."

"THE EASIEST WAY."

"Truth is never gentle," says one of the speakers in the drama called "The Easiest Way," by Mr. Eugene Walter, which was performed for the first time in New York at the Stuyvesant Theatre (now, 1912, the Belasco), and which was seen and heard by a numerous assemblage that did not appear to be either edified by its commonplace ethical deliverance or shocked by the blatant impropriety of its theme. Aphorisms relative to truth are readily manufactured, and they have been supplied with profuse liberality by the makers and purveyors of tainted theatrical trash. The truth about Mr. Walter's play,—a composition which, while not particularly clever in any respect, is both specious in its reasoning and offensive in its substance and has enjoyed a wide popularity and much approval,—would be anything but gentle, if fully expressed. Respect for good taste, however, enjoins a decent reserve in discussion of sexual immorality. The story of the play is the story of episodes in the life of a courtesan. The position assumed, by implication, if not openly, by Mr. Walter, a professional dramatist, and, apparently, ratified by Mr. Belasco, also a professional dramatist and, still further, a theatrical manager of great experience and influence, declares that "the easiest way" in which a woman can obtain and hold a position on the stage and live in luxury off it is the way which lies through

living vicious lives. The young woman's "summer season" in a Denver "stock company" (for the "show business" environment continues) has ended, and the gay *Brockton* arrives in Colorado, to escort his paramour back to New York. He mentions that he has hired a house in Riverside Drive, in which they are to dwell, and that he purposes to form a theatrical company in which, if she continues to consort with him, she will occupy the first place. This is a crisis, but *Miss Murdock* feels that she cannot at once part with her *Madison*, and she is constrained to apprise her *Brockton* of this new attachment—adding, however, that she has not yet reached a final decision, "either for stay or going." *Madison* and *Brockton* are then confronted, and it is alleged that each feels a sort of brotherly attraction for the other—a phenomenal feeling, under the circumstances, since each has the best of all reasons, as humanity is constituted, not only for dislike but hatred. *Madison* and *Miss Murdock* are left alone, to discuss their affairs. They agree to marry. The Past shall be considered dead. The Future shall be decent. A new life shall open. For a while they will separate, in order that *Madison*, whose weekly stipend, as a newspaper reporter, is thirty dollars, may accumulate enough money to maintain his spouse in luxury, after their marriage. No reason is shown why they should not marry at once and remain together;—only it is clear, if they had done so, a nasty play would have

been abruptly terminated. The licentious *Brockton*, being apprised of their decision, accedes to it, merely placing his intimate knowledge of *Miss Murdock* at the disposal of her new lover and assuring him that the possession of her precious affections will require “a lot of money.” The hopeful *Madison* avows his foreknowledge of that interesting fact, and announces an energetic purpose to accumulate the necessary cash. An amazing agreement is then made between those two men: if while *Madison*, in the far West, is toiling for wealth *Miss Murdock* should seek the aid and “comfort other than pecuniary” (Alexander Hamilton) of the festive *Brockton*, in the far East, the young woman shall be compelled to notify *Mr. Madison* of that fact; while if *Brockton* should seek to resume his relations with *Miss Murdock* he will communicate his purpose to the said *Madison*.

Miss Murdock returns to New York and makes an effort to earn her living as a theatrical performer. *Brockton* uses private influence to thwart her purpose, by keeping her out of employment. She dwells in a wretched boarding-house, among impoverished persons. She pawns her jewels. She cannot pay the rent of her abode. *Brockton* sends to her another courtesan, a former associate, to ascertain her circumstances and persuade her to return to his service, in her former capacity. She resumes her occupation as a concubine. *Brockton* dictates a farewell letter which he commands

her to write and send to *Madison*, places \$500 on her bureau, and leaves her to execute his command. That, after reflection, she decides not to do, keeping her decision a secret—so that neither *Madison* nor *Brockton* is advised of it. A little time passes, and, on a morning after a debauch, *Brockton* reads in a newspaper that *Madison* has found gold, and *Miss Murdock* receives a telegram from her betrothed swain stating that he is about to arrive and will marry her at once. *Brockton* now learns that *Madison* has not been apprised of her infidelity. A quarrel occurs, but *Brockton* is persuaded to leave to *Miss Murdock* the pleasing duty of enlightening the Colorado lover. *Madison* comes and *Miss Murdock* lies to him, saying that she has prospered on the stage, and is living on the remuneration of her labor,—whereupon he goes forth to arrange for their marriage. *Brockton* reappears, and there is another row, more violent than the first—so that *Brockton* temporarily retires. *Madison* returns and is about to depart with his salubrious sweetheart, when *Brockton* re-enters and signifies, by his familiar conduct, that he is at home. *Madison* instantly perceives the truth, draws a pistol, and is about to blow *Mr. Brockton's* head off, when *Miss Murdock* exclaims “Don’t shoot!” Those mystic words would, of course, instantly check the actions of a passionate man, frenzied with jealousy, rage, and furious resentment of monstrous deceit! At all events they do—in this play. *Brockton* improves the occasion

by delivering a speech of commiseration, assuring *Madison* that he “would not have had this thing happen for anything”; after which he makes a glad escape. *Madison* then denounces *Miss Murdock*, in good, set terms, and *Miss Murdock* produces a pistol and declares the intention of suicide. *Madison* summons a negro servant, to witness this heroic deed, but *Miss Murdock* proves unequal to the emergency, and *Madison* gravely retires. *Miss Murdock*, finding that she has lost both the opportunity of getting a husband and the certainty of retaining a pecunious paramour, hurls her pistol into a drawer, utters vehement remarks, and finally commands her servant to dress her in her finest attire, so that she can repair to a popular restaurant and “make a hit”—meaning, apparently, in order that she can successfully resume her original and principal vocation. That is the play of “The Easiest Way.”

“It is not nor it cannot come to good.” To look at such a spectacle is not to be benefited; it is only to be disgusted. The mind of the observer is filled with loathsome images of corrupt conduct and is drenched with a sense of degradation. The only really respectable person in the drama is an honest theatrical “advance agent,” a poor fellow, who is trying to do his work well, and whose presence, although the part has nothing to do with the play, affords some relief to its continuous portraiture of evil motive and vile behavior. That part, *Jim Weston*, was acted in a thoroughly able man-

ner by Mr. William Sampson, an actor trained in a good school, following in the wake of that true artist and humorist, James Lewis, and bettering the instruction he received from Augustin Daly and in the companionship of Charles Fisher, Ada Rehan, and Mrs. Gilbert. Mr. Sampson is not a leader; his abilities do not tend, so far as known, toward great characters; his style is hard, and his acting is somewhat colored with a self-complacency which lessens its effect; but—he *is* an *artist*; he can assume character and sustain it; and he can indicate deep feeling.

The character of *Madison* is a distortion of Nature. The conduct of the man is improbable, to the last degree—and he is offered as natural! *Madison* has lived a profligate life. Profligate men do not select their wives from the demi-monde. If they do not know much, they know better than that. An idolatrous passion might, perhaps, overwhelm such a man; but, if it should do so, he would never, at the last, suffer the wretched courtesan to be tossed back upon the dung-hill of depravity. Such a man as *Madison* is shown to be would have used his pistol, would have shot both the liars who had tricked him, and, very likely, would then have shot himself.

Brockton is well drawn, though involved in an absurd situation. He represents one of the vilest and most detestable classes in modern society—the vicious, licentious, cynical business men, who accumulate wealth by

all means of acquisition that they can employ without being sent to prison, and who live for the gratification of their sensual desires. The theatrical community saw that ideal made terribly actual in the late Richard Mansfield's great, but loathsome, impersonation of *Baron Chevrial*. Mr. Joseph Kilgour's embodiment of *Brockton* was truthful, and it was commendable equally for art and truth. It exhibited self-control, poise, authority, and the right kind of physique with which to "look the part." The actor used a hard voice, with nasal tones, characteristic of this climate and that class, and he sustained the character evenly and more than well—so well as to be revolting.

The character of *Laura Murdock* incorporates innate selfishness, inordinate vanity, contemptible weakness, and a consenting disposition toward treachery and vice. Her experience is hard and her condition becomes pitiable, because woman in trouble is always pitiable; yet she never awakens pity. In all respects her conduct is vile. Miss Frances Starr acted the part and showed vivacity and energy. The actress has profited by Mr. Belasco's instruction. In him she has a teacher possessed of great knowledge of life, of the Stage, and of the art of acting. Her performance was consistent, varied, and sustained, while neither sympathetic nor impressive. There was a wealth of photographic detail in it, which is not authoritative as acting, though sufficiently useful as ornament.

The drama of "The Easiest Way" was produced with excessive attention to detail. The rooms were reproductions of fact. Nothing in the matter of surface detail was forgotten,—from the rickety wardrobe, with doors that will not close; the disordered sheets of music and other truck piled on top of it, in the boarding-house chamber, to the picturesque, discreetly restrained, disorder of the opulent apartments, the signs of a drunken orgy, and the artfully disclosed and disordered bed. All that stage management could do to create and deepen the impression of reality, in the presentation of a vicious play, was done. The result was a deformity magnificently framed to look like nature. Many thousands of persons have seen the play; no person is the better or the happier for having seen it. There is nothing in it to be enjoyed; *there is nothing to be learned from it*. There was nothing in it but some technical merit in acting, and the creation of atmosphere,—and the better those things are, when applied to an offensive subject, the more reprehensible becomes its theatrical representation: at the very best, only another thing done well that ought not to have been done at all.

"THE THUNDERBOLT."

In his play of "The Thunderbolt,"—first produced in America at the New Theatre, New York, November 12, 1910,—in some respects the best play that he has written, Pinero provided an absorbing story of actual

life, diversified and strongly contrasted types of character, situations of suspense, and dialogue which possesses the authentic sound of truth and which is adroitly and effectively interblended with action. The scene is laid in an English provincial city of to-day. The persons essentially concerned are, for the most part, members of one family, named *Mortimore*. It is premised that a wealthy member of that family has died, and that his relatives, the “next of kin,” are eager to inherit his large estate. Search has been made for a will of the deceased, but no will has been found,—the reason being that a member of the family, *Phillis Mortimore*, wife of one of the deceased man’s brothers, has stolen and surreptitiously destroyed it. The heirs-at-law, most of whom are persons of common, selfish, sordid character, are pleased that no obstacle should exist to their acquisition of a valuable inheritance, and they prepare to take possession of it. *Phillis Mortimore*, overwhelmed by remorse, confesses to her husband the crime that she has committed, and he, in turn, taking her fault and shame upon himself, apprises the expectant heirs that their deceased relative did, in fact, leave a will, bequeathing his entire estate to his illegitimate daughter, and he narrates to them the particulars of the theft and destruction of it, as having been effected by himself. That disclosure is the Thunderbolt, shattering a structure of many expectations and selfish plans.

Discrepancies in the confession, however, are detected by two lawyers, who are among the auditors of it, and by means of their incisive questioning the identity of the actual criminal is disclosed. In the sequel the estate is conceded to the rightful heir, a lovely girl, who, with startling magnanimity, shares her inheritance with her father's relatives and connections, incidentally bestowing a portion upon a charity hospital,—her motive being one of compassion and extreme benevolence.

The several characters in this play are discriminated with peculiar and eminently felicitous skill. *James Mortimore* is a sturdy, honest, blunt, matter-of-fact, self-sufficient, dominant, coarsely animal Englishman of the lower-middle class, acquisitive and uncouth, but conscientious. *Stephen Mortimore* is a greedy, peevish, querulous, narrow-minded, insincere, consequential, shrewd, grasping, utterly commonplace person. *Thaddeus Mortimore* is a kindly man, of a far finer fibre than that of his brothers, honest, affectionate, capable of sentiment, and made strong, at a crisis, by love for his wife, *Phillis*, the weak woman who has stolen and destroyed the will. *Ann* and *Louisa*, the wives, respectively, of *James* and *Stephen*, are reputable, insufferable vulgarians, of the domestic dullard order, addicted by nature to mean, petty, malicious views and spiteful gossip. *Rose Mortimore*, wife of *Colonel Ponting*,—a bumptious, perky, ruthless self-seeker,—is an addle-



From a Photograph by Byron.

A SCENE (ACT III.) FROM "THE THUNDERBOLT," AS ACTED AT THE NEW THEATRE.

ALBERT BRUNING. LOUIS CALVERT.

A. E. ANSON.

E. M. HOLLAND. FERG. GOTTSCHALK.
BEN JOHNSON.

In the Collection of the Author.

headed and spiteful copyist of the London fashionable lady. *Helen Thornhill*, the illegitimate daughter of the deceased *Mortimore*, is a bright, sweet, resolute, independent young woman, devoted to art and capable of earning her living, and, in a painful emergency, she evinces the breadth of an innately noble mind. The precision with which each identity is sustained, in naturally contrived and inevitably sequent situations, throughout colloquies that tell the story without superfluous words, is extraordinary and in the highest degree admirable. There are four acts. In the first the putative heirs are convened and the entangled circumstances are made known. In the second the felony is confessed. In the third the truth is revealed to all concerned. In the fourth an adjustment of affairs is arranged, accordant to *Helen Thornhill's* impulse of generosity and feminine heedlessness of law or justice.

The opening scene is reminiscent of the opening scene of Bulwer's comedy of “Money,” and in contriving that an innocent person shall shield a guilty one, by assuming the guilt, the dramatist has employed an old expedient. His use of old devices being new and his method brilliant, that does not matter. The scene in which *Phillis* confesses her crime and that in which *Thaddeus* is questioned by the lawyers are singularly vital pieces of dramatic construction and writing, and during the performance of them the audience is held in a tremor of suspense. In almost every particular the acting

was worthy of the play. Mr. Louis Calvert's embodiment of *James Mortimore*,—solid with force of character, massive with resolution, firmly poised upon will, narrow in mentality, hard in temperament, and clearly indicative of that person's long experience of a grinding, bitter, harsh ordeal of life,—ranks with the best examples that the contemporary Stage has provided of common human nature. The physical investiture of it was perfect. Mr. A. E. Anson, in the more complex and exacting part of *Thaddeus Mortimore*, gave a rare example of sympathetic and impressive impersonation, making the character distinct, sustaining it without deviation, and amply responding to the heavy demand which it makes upon deep feeling and fervent expression. The sweet, cheerful spirit of *Thaddeus*, before he knows that his wife has stolen the will, and his protective tenderness toward that wretched, suffering woman, after her confession, were shown in a manner that was lovely in its sincerity and simplicity. The pervasive tone of the performance was purely chivalrous. The false story of the theft and destruction of the will, told in the vain effort to protect his wife, was uttered with a subdued earnestness and a breaking voice that were truly pathetic, and the aggregate of the performance,—demeanor, speech, listening quietude, and expressive movement,—was clearly indicative of quick perception of character, fine mentality, knowledge of human nature, and either an informing experience of

sorrow or an intuitive grasp of the meaning of it. The manner of the exit when the afflicted husband exclaims "I never have regretted my marriage,"—meaning to testify his unshaken, abiding faith in the woman whose wrong-doing he knows but rightly attributes to weakness and not to wickedness,—was so fine that it illumined the actor as well as the character. Louis Gottschalk made the peppery little *Colonel Ponting* comically absurd and offensively real in his utter selfishness,—as he ought to be. The sterling value of personality in the actor and of repose in the actor's art was graphically shown by Mr. E. M. Holland and Mr. Ben Johnson in their respective performances of the two lawyers, *Elkin* and *Vallance*,—slight parts, but made of exactly the right importance by equable sustainment of dignity, good breeding, and judicial demeanor. Mr. Johnson's manner and tone of voice, in uttering the words "Good morning," as *Vallance* makes his final exit, were at once exceedingly amusing and subtly expositive of the faculty of suggestive expression, half-revealing, as they did, a whole volume of meaning—the contemptuous disgust of a lawyer who is a gentleman for clients whom he despises and for the sordid attributes of human nature of which he has seen so much and grown so weary. Miss Olive Wyndham, as *Helen Thornhill*, pleased by her refinement of manner, the ease of her level speaking, and the earnest feeling that she evinced in the few moments of excitement which are provided for the part.

Certain exasperating and certain ludicrous traits of the petty, conventional, commonplace female character were made sufficiently evident by Mrs. Harriett Otis Dellenbaugh, Miss Helen Reimer, and Miss Olive Oliver, as *Ann*, *Louisa*, and *Rose Mortimore*, who are, in a sense, echoes of their respective husbands. *Ann Mortimore's* iterated assurance "that there are two sides to every question" was skilfully made to illustrate the vexatious dreariness of the dullard mind, and Miss Reimer was clever in her utterance of it. Pinero has often shown in his plays,—and shown in an amusing fashion,—his contemptuous impatience with hide-bound character and stupid ways of life and thought. One of the chief charms of the representation of "The Thunderbolt" was the element of dramatic picture in it,—as when the attention of all the persons involved is centred upon one point, during *Elkin's* questioning of *Thaddeus Mortimore*. Every figure, in that scene, was expressive and every face eloquent. The opening of the play would sooner awaken the interest of an audience if the secret of the theft and destruction of the will were sooner and more clearly intimated.

It was a pleasure to met Arthur Pinero again in his proper field. For years he had chosen to follow in the track of certain French dramatists who undertake to dispense "moral instruction" in the Theatre by exhibiting "the seamy side" of life, and, in such plays as "The Gay Lord Quex" and "Iris," he had invited miscel-

laneous public consideration and discussion of the disreputable proceedings of bawds and blackguards. In "The Thunderbolt" he turned away from those tainted, tiresome, barren themes and emerged as the expert painter and delicate satirist of human nature who charmed society, long ago, by "Sweet Lavender," "The Squire," "The Cabinet Minister," "The Magistrate," "The Amazons," "Trelawny of the Wells," and "The Princess and the Butterfly." He is a dramatist of brilliant ability, and the devotion of his fine talents exclusively to clean subjects would be an immense public benefit. The company into which the spectator of "The Thunderbolt" is introduced,—for the most part neither pleasant nor lovable,—is literal, not ideal, being drawn, as Hogarth drew, from knowledge rather than imagination, but it is not revolting by reason of base propensity, and it inspires and retains interest. Human beings, whether generous or selfish, are shown in domestic relations and pursuits which are not controlled by erotic motive or swathed in the dense atmosphere of sensuality. The play accentuates contempt for meanness and greed, and at the same time it prompts a gentle pity for human weakness and error, while also it stimulates thought on the strange variety of conditions in which members of every community live, and thus tends to broaden an observer's perception of social systems and human fate.

"POMANDER WALK."

*"We love the rare old days and rich
That poetry has painted;
We mourn that sacred age with which
We never were acquainted!"*

—FREDERICK LOCKER.

In the ministration of art it has long been more or less customary, and of late years it has been almost incessant, to choose for representation images of mankind that are horrible and phases of human conduct that are revolting, and to justify the choice by declaring that the purpose of art is to hold the mirror up to Nature,—as if Nature, necessarily and exclusively, is everything ugly and venomous. The function of tragic art, as stated by Aristotle and confirmed by the experience of ages, is to excite pity and terror. That proposition is undisputed: the heart can be touched and the mind elevated by the exposition of tragic experience; but there is a wide difference between the portrayal of tragic experience and the portrayal of morbid anatomy and physical disease. The practice of showing abhorrent types of character and depraved conditions, particularly on the stage, has been pushed to an insufferably tedious extreme. If the purpose of the arts is not to help mankind,—to advance civilization, to awaken and stimulate the love of beauty, to diffuse gentleness of feeling and refinement of manners,

and, while giving pleasure, to make men and women better,—then they have no purpose that is worthy of being considered. If there were nothing more in the practice of the art of the Theatre than that one person should display ingenuity in observing and making records of the surfaces of common individuals and experiences, that another person should display cleverness in embodying and animating those records, and that still another should admire and applaud their ingenuity and cleverness, then, indeed, the art of the Theatre would be no more worthy of thoughtful attention than are the grimaces and gyrations of monkeys in a cage. It happens, however, that the art of the Theatre is intellectual, that it has often been made beautiful, and that it can always be made so. All intelligent and earnest actors and writers, however they may chance to differ as to methods and details of execution, are implacably opposed to misuse and degradation of the Stage, and there are discernible signs that the public mind is in close sympathy with such actors and writers, and, particularly of late, is antagonistic to that managerial policy which, whether from ignorance or greed or both, has done much to blight the true prosperity of the Theatre and degrade its art. When, accordingly, a dramatist pursues the simple, honest, direct, and proper course in writing for the Stage, exemplifying dissent from a prevalent proclivity for drama that is “strong” with the strength of the onion, there is legitimate cause for public

rejoicing. Such cause was provided by the expert professional achievement of Louis N. Parker, in his play called "Pomander Walk."

In that comedy, which was brought forth for the first time in New York at Wallack's Theatre on December 20, 1910, there is more of picture than of play, but the picture is healthful and pretty, and, though an idealized transcript of ordinary, usual, probable life, it is warm with kindly feeling, gay with playfulness, and lovely with delicate sentiment. The construction of the piece could be made more symmetrical by the excision of superfluous colloquy, and the dialogue could be improved by the excision of a few tart lines which are inharmonious with the otherwise invariably genial spirit of the composition, and also by such a recasting of the explanatory conversation between *Lord Otford* and *Madame Lachesnais* as would extirpate the element of artificiality; but there is valuable substance of truth in the piece, there is novelty in the investiture of it, and those merits impart to it decisive value and charm: its total effect is delightful.

It was a happily inventive plan that selected a little blind alley in the suburbs of mighty London as a scene for exhibition of the tastefully selected everyday proceedings of every-day persons. Many such strange little byways,—backwaters in the turbulent, rushing stream of civic life,—were to be found in London. Dickens and Thackeray utilized them and pur-

sued the same method, and the influence of those authors is distinctly evident in Mr. Parker's pleasing fabric of contrasted characters, ordinary incidents, odd little dilemmas, ludicrous situations, and ambling colloquy,—a colloquy touched with quizzical, lambent humor and with a delicate feeling that is sympathetic with the ardor of youth and neither ignorant nor regardless of the sensibility of age. It is not possible to tell a dramatic story without portraying character: it *is* possible to portray character without telling a dramatic story; and that is what, essentially, Mr. Parker has done in “Pomander Walk.” The element of character,—perhaps the most vitally interesting single element observable in either life or art,—is its chief merit, and the author has contrived to make contrast and suggestion wonderfully effective. *Lord Otford* is a widower. *Madame Lachesnais* is a widow. They are in the autumn of life. In its spring-time they were lovers, but the imperious father of the youth compelled him to discard the girl, and so they were alienated. After many years and much experience they meet again, in Pomander Walk, strangely drawn together by the fortuitous circumstance that the son of the man and the daughter of the woman have met, loved, and plighted their troth. The old love has lasted, and it springs up from its embers and glows again into the vital beauty of a sweet, tranquil affection. The old lovers, finally, are united,

and the young lovers,—at first thwarted,—are made happy by parental sanction, and so all perplexity is dispelled. A sweet, simple story, all the better and all the more attractive for its sweetness and simplicity! One of the six houses in Pomander Walk is occupied by a retired naval officer, a bluff, breezy, vehement, vociferous old man, who would befriend the young lovers, and who is pursued and ultimately captured, in matrimony, by his next-door neighbor, an elderly widow. Another of those houses is tenanted by a retired butler who possesses a sentimental, jealous, ailing wife, and who,—being, in reality, employed as a paid toastmaster at a city club,—makes himself ridiculous by bedizening his fat person with fantastic fine raiment, and pretending to be a man of fashion, an exquisite dandy and a crony of Sheridan, Fox, and the Prince Regent. A bashful violinist lodges, with two maiden ladies, in a fourth of those habitations and is enamored of one of them, to whom he dares not declare his passion till prompted by a parrot which has been taught by the lady to interject into its customarily profane discourse an admonition which, presently, is vociferously delivered to the violinist: “Burn your lungs and liver! Tell Barbara you love her!” Another denizen of the Walk is a mild, seedy old clergyman, brimful of antiquarian lore, heraldic and other, whom the youth, *Lieutenant Sayle*, son of *Lord Otford*, presses into his service, in the winning of his

sweetheart, the daughter of *Madame Lachesnais*. The *Lone Fisherman* of the burlesque of “Evangeline” reappears, in the person of a silent angler, in the last stages of shabbiness, who is called *The Eyesore*, and whose only business is to fish in the Thames River, which flows past the end of Pomander Walk, and never get a bite. The whimsical display of persons, eighteen in number, some notable, others insignificant,—meeting, talking, parting, misunderstanding one another, but at last coming into harmony,—constitutes whatever drama can be found in “Pomander Walk.”

Viewed abstractly as a play, “Pomander Walk” is gossamer contrasted with such modern examples of drama as “The Middleman,” “Wealth,” “Judah,” “The Princess and the Butterfly,” “Jim the Penman,” “Diplomacy,” “Alabama,” “Leah Kleschna,” “The Thief,” “The Witching Hour,” and “The Thunderbolt.” It ranks in the category of less substantial but more delicate fabrics of lace-like mechanism, plays round which many happy memories are twined, such as “Sweet Lavender,” “Rosemary,” “The Professor’s Love Story,” and “A Royal Family.” The sources of some of the characters and some of the “business” might be named; but the jolly tar who throws open his window in order to join in a chorus and then slams it shut again is not less funny because he comes, originally, from the street where *Captain Cuttle* dwelt with *Mrs. McStinger*. *Admiral Antrobus* and his faithful old sea dog are not

less interesting because they were once called *Admiral Bertram* and old *Mazey* and dwelt at St. Crux in the Marsh. The humbug *Brook-Hoskyns* is not less a comic absurdity because he has long abounded in Thackeray's sketches. Judgment is thankful that the worth of the piece is so much and the defect of it so little. The presence of such a play on our Stage at any time is nothing less than a public benefaction.

LEAVES FROM MY JOURNAL.

THE WAKE OF MRS. WARREN.

March 31, 1907:—The wake of *Sister Warren*, conducted by Sister Shaw at the Manhattan Theatre, has lasted three weeks. The mourning was concluded there last night. It began on March 9, and the services over Brother Shaw's odoriferous heroine, besides enlisting the services of Sister Shaw, have implicated the rites that are appropriate to such solemnities. The deceased was becomingly decorated and the mourners, particularly Sister Shaw and the Chevalier Ratcliffe, poured a liberal spirit into their lamentations, and enjoyed, to the fullest extent, "the luxury of woe." *Mrs. Warren*, it is remembered, was knocked on the head, about a year ago, by a policeman's club, and she died in consequence. The cadaver has been in cold storage ever since, awaiting the arrival of bereaved friends. The weepers have been somewhat slow in



From a Photograph by White, N. Y.

In the Collection of the Author.

A SCENE FROM "POMANDER WALK," AS ACTED AT WALLACK'S THEATRE.

coming, but they have come at last, and it is a melancholy pleasure to record that the sad relics of Brother Shaw's admired friend have been duly mourned. The defunct *Sister* will be paraded through other cities with a view to a more protracted lamentation. The burial, it is understood, will occur at the convenience of the Shaw Family. It was noticed by Lord Byron that "there is a tear for all that die," and it may here be said that the profound truth of his lordship's touching remark receives fresh confirmation in view of the occurrence of these solemn obsequies of *Mrs. Warren*. The dear deceased was, in her lifetime, an inveterate bore, a public nuisance, and an object of general aversion; but she has run her course, and there can be no possible objection to the interment of her frailties with her bones. Meanwhile, it is sweet and commendable on the part of Sister Shaw and company to weep for her, and likewise for the undertaker to pipe his eye. Let the pious drops exude, till, in kind Nature's course, their fount is dried. "The Court will wear full mourning for a week."

There is a serious word to say relative to the attempt to foist that nuisance on the Public and the Stage. The play of "Mrs. Warren's Profession" was first produced at the Hyperion Theatre, in New Haven, Con-

necticut, on October 27, 1905, by Mr. Arnold Daly, an actor, and Mr. Samuel W. Gompertz. The Mayor of New Haven prevented a repetition of it there. On October 30 the play was produced at the Garrick Theatre, New York. The principal parts were, on that occasion, cast thus:

Sir George Crofts	Fred Tyler
Rev. Samuel Gardner	John Findlay
Frank Gardner	Arnold Daly
Mrs. Warren	Mary Shaw
Vivie Warren	Chrystal Herne

A portion of the public, seeming to suppose that the performance was to be an exhibition of libidinous indecency, made a disgraceful and revolting spectacle of itself in an effort to obtain admission to the theatre. Only one presentment of the piece was given,—a repetition of it being prevented by order of the Police Commissioner, William McAdoo. The right to present the play in public, affirming that to do so was not to maintain a public nuisance, was eventually established by the courts, in New York State. Much paltry twaddle has been uttered about the “good effect” of its production. The Dean of the University of Nebraska, Lucius Adelno Sherman, has been indicated as approving the play. The learned Professor Phelps, of Yale University, has been quoted as approving of it. Another publicist has declared in print, to many readers, that “this play was a great dramatist’s supreme challenge

to society." It becomes desirable, therefore, as well as pertinent, in this work, to bestow upon this play and its production a little of the "serious attention" desired by "serious minded persons."

Miss Mary Shaw has declared, "one thing I saw very clearly. The play and its motive were distinctly misunderstood from the beginning." That, possibly, is true: but it is not very probable, at least among thinking persons. Mr. G. B. Shaw, in defending his nasty play about *Mrs. Warren*, alleged that his purpose was to protest against a shopkeeping tyranny which he assumes and alleges to exist, that drives women into a vicious life by withholding from them fair wages for their labor. These are Mr. Shaw's words:

"The play ["Mrs. Warren's Profession"] is, *simply, a study in prostitution*, and its aim is to show that prostitution is not the prostitute's fault, but the fault of a society which pays for a poor and pretty woman's prostitution in solid gold, and pays for her honesty with starvation, drudgery, and pious twaddle."

That statement is, at least, explicit, and it shows that the theme and character of Mr. Shaw's offensive play have not been altogether misapprehended by intelligent observers. Assuming, for the sake of argument (a violent and unwarranted assumption, in view of the contents of his play), that Mr. Shaw *was* actuated *only* by true *humanitarian motive*, objection to "Mrs. Warren" still remains valid, because the Theatre is not,

never was, and never can be the proper place for the presentment of such "studies."

Against Mr. Shaw's statement it is interesting to place the statement of Mr. Justice Olmsted, of the Court of Special Sessions, made in the judicial decision in the case involving the play of "Mrs. Warren's Profession," handed down on July 6, 1906.

"... That his [Shaw's] main idea was *not* the discussion of the social evil, so called, seems to be demonstrated by the fact that not one of the characters of the play refutes the sophistical reasoning of the courtesan mother with the statement, *which we, judicially, know to be true*, that the prostitute is *not*, ordinarily, driven to her choice of calling by anything other than her motive to satisfy the desire of her senses, without work. . . ."

That, as bearing on Mr. Shaw's plea for the prostitute, is the plain unvarnished truth as to the subject, ascertained, by experience, in the courts of justice—and indorsed by the experience of mankind. It is fair, however, to accept the author's declaration of intention as true. It will be observed that Mr. Shaw's expressed solicitude restricts itself to the alleged wrongs and suffering of "a poor and *pretty* woman." There is a belief that the poor and *homely* woman, in trouble or degradation, is as much an object of compassion and as much entitled to sympathy and help as is the pretty one. But, aside from the question of remedy for what is called "the social evil," the Theatre is not a fit place for the "discussion" of that subject

or any subject like it. That prostitution exists and flourishes: that prostitutes sometimes suffer terribly: that their existence, and often diseased condition, is a terrible menace to public health: that the regulation and, as far as humanly possible, the extirpation of that dreadful profession is a crying need—all that and much more relative to the subject is known, and widely known. But the public discussion of those subjects, in as far as *public* discussion of them is necessary, concerns social philosophers,—organizations such as Dr. Prince A. Morrow's "Society for Sanitation and Moral Prophylaxis"—doctors, legislators,—persons who bear the burden and responsibility of government and who are competent to instruct and discuss them under the right conditions and in the right way. The theatrical audience is composed largely of young persons, many of them girls, at an age when they are exceptionally sensitive to impressions. It is not prudishness: it is knowledge of the world and common sense that would bar anything and everything tending to cause and promote indiscriminate notice and discussion among young persons, or in a promiscuous assemblage (such as always convenes in a theatre), of such themes as "the social evil" and its consequences. No right-minded, well-bred person introduces an indelicate, not to say foul, subject for conversation in a drawing-room. The introduction of such a subject would be considered—and justly so—an insult: and there is no more justifica-

tion for insulting people in a theatre than there would be for insulting them in a parlor. The public does not attend the theatre for the purpose of obtaining information and "views" about evil, its cause or its cure. The notion that social evils can be corrected by writing plays about them is little better than idiotic.

But Mr. Shaw writes like a charlatan whose stock in trade is paradox. In the same communication from which his statement above quoted is taken he says that: "There are people (*sic*) with whom you can discuss such subjects, and people (*sic*) to whom you cannot mention them. The patrons of the prostitutes form the main body of the latter, and the women who are engaged in rescuing women are the backbone of the former. *Get the rescuers into the theatre, and keep the patrons out. . . .*"

That is, *exclude* the persons to whom the "moral lesson" of his play (if it had one, which it has not) should be addressed (meaning the very class that teachers of theatrical "lessons" might, perhaps, improve—if anybody could be improved by the "frightful example"), and "get into the theatre" the reformers engaged in the charitable work of trying to reclaim degraded women,—the reformers (typified at their best by such a public benefactor as Jane Addams), who by personal observation and contact are familiar with the shocking details of the subject, and who know far more about it than Mr. Shaw does, and do not require infor-

mation from him or anybody else: and then, having got those reformers in, affront them by a flippant, irrelevant "study" of the terrible condition they are seeking to correct—having charged them from fifty cents to \$2, or more, for the affront, and thus obtained handsome royalties for a crack-brained, mischief-making English-Irish socialist!

Miss Mary Shaw, who has shown herself not only willing but eager to be identified as the representative of *Mrs. Warren* and as a moving spirit in promoting its public presentation, may be entirely honest in her conviction, expressed in print, that "the central idea is the poignant pathos of a motherhood that is not legitimate, but is as loving and protective as a legitimate one," and that the presentation of the play is for the public good. That is no reason why persons of sense and sound judgment should adopt her erroneous view—which is an insult to honest womanhood. The order of mind that can suppose a fortuitous, illegitimate motherhood to be "as loving and protective" as that which is the purest and most sacred relation of society is not likely to command profound respect. Whatever may be Miss Shaw's beliefs, it is well to recall that "*Mrs. Warren's Profession*" was revived, after its single New York performance, for her use, by Mr. Al. H. Woods, the same "manager" who brought forth "*The Girl in the Taxi*," "*The Girl with the Whooping Cough*," and "*Get Busy with Emily*,"—all of which

were suppressed for indecency,—and “The Narrow Path,” which was driven from the New York Stage, after one performance, by universal denunciation; because that fact furnishes a significant denotement of the actual motive which underlay the desire to “teach lessons” with “Mrs. Warren’s Profession.” “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

XV.

“OLIVER TWIST”

THE marvellous mind of Charles Dickens, remarkable for many diverse faculties and attributes, was especially remarkable for a prodigious, overwhelming vitality, and when he read from his own works that vitality was poured into his Readings as abundantly as it had been poured into the works themselves. His most charming readings were those which introduced *Dr. Marigold* and *Mrs. Gamp*. I thought when hearing them that he most enjoyed his rendering of scenes from “*Martin Chuzzlewit*” and “*The Pickwick Papers*,” but I know that he highly valued his impersonations,—for such they were,—of leading characters in “*Oliver Twist*.” He liked melodrama, and as a platform actor he took great pains to impersonate *Sikes*, *Nancy*, and *Fagin*. His son Charles, who visited America in 1888, and whom it was my privilege to number among my friends, told me that his father’s physicians earnestly warned him against the tremendous efforts he made as a reader, and especially against the violent exertions incident to his reading from “*Oliver Twist*.” “On one occasion,” so the younger Dickens continued, “while we were living

at Gad's Hill a frightful disturbance occurred in the neighborhood,—shrieks, yells, moans, and cries for help. On investigation I found that the alarming clamor had been made by my father, who was rehearsing in the open air, and, as he explained, had, in the person of *Sikes*, just murdered *Nancy!*"

Dickens wrote "Oliver Twist" in 1837 and published it serially in "Bentley's Magazine," of which he was then the editor. Book publication immediately followed, and in 1838 a play, based on the novel, was produced at two theatres in London, the Pavilion and the Surrey, but representation of it was soon prohibited as detrimental to the public welfare. In 1839 the play reached New York. It was presented at the Franklin Theatre, in Chatham Street, on January 7, that year, and on February 7, at the Park Theatre, in Park Row, and it has been, practically, a stock piece in the American Theatre ever since, although in recent years it has not often been presented.

The arrival of the Dickens Centenary, February 7, 1912, naturally prompted recurrence to the Dickens Plays, some of which are peculiarly serviceable because of their potent, elemental humanity, abundant humor, and vivid contrasts of character, and it was inevitable that "Oliver Twist" should be the first of those plays chosen for revival. There is, indeed, a valid objection to it. Loathsome aspects of actual "slum" life are photographically shown in it,—vice, crime,

degradation, brutality, and horror,—and that is a kind of theatrical exhibition which has not proved itself to be beneficial either to Society or the Stage; but notwithstanding its offensive incidents, its squalor of atmosphere, and the artificiality of its sentiment, the old play possesses attributes of exceptional theatrical merit,—action, incident, character, suspense, terror, humor, and pathos,—it abounds in good parts, and it provides ample scope for exercise of the faculty of impersonation. A new dramatic epitome of some of the leading incidents of the novel was made by the experienced dramatist Joseph Comyns-Carr, and was produced, July 10, 1905, at His Majesty's Theatre, London, by Herbert Beer-bohm-Tree, who acted *Fagin*, and, on February 26, 1912, that play was presented at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York,—the chief parts being cast thus:

Fagin	N. C. Goodwin
Nancy	Constance Collier
Bill Sikes	Lyn Harding
Oliver Twist	Marie Doro
Rose Maylie	Olive Wyndham
Monks	Howard Gould
Mrs. Maylie	Suzanne Sheldon
Harry Maylie	Courtney Foote
Mr. Brownlow	Charles Harbury
Mr. Grimwig	Fuller Mellish

Mr. Carr's version of the play is not a good one. It appears to have been made with the determinate

purpose of suiting the requirements of Beerbohm-Tree, and, accordingly, the greatest possible prominence was given to the character of *Fagin*,—the consequence being a much stronger emphasis on the horror of the story than on its humanity and pathos. Dickens expressed the opinion that in depicting “the dregs of life,” painting criminals “in all their deformity, wretchedness, and squalid misery,” showing them “as they really were, forever skulking uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life, with the great black gallows closing up their prospect, turn them where they might,” he was doing “something which would be a service to society.” It was a mistaken opinion: his depiction of “the dregs of life,” in “*Oliver Twist*,” has done no good, has only served to show his close observation and his literary faculty: but his diffusion, in that work, and in other works, of the spirit of charity has been of enormous public benefit. That is the spirit which a play on this subject ought particularly to provide and which a performance of the play ought to elicit and impart.

The performance given by Goodwin and his associates was mechanical and heavy, conveying, as a whole, little more than a sense of something wicked and horrible. *Nancy* was made repellent, ineffective, and tedious by the intrinsic insincerity of the acting of Constance Collier, reinforced by her grotesque affectation and her distressingly defective elocution. Lyn Harding, as *Sikes*,

while he accurately simulated the appearance and demeanor of a ruffian, did not conceal his inherent antipathy to the part sufficiently to make the simulation convincing. Marie Doro made *Oliver* merely pretty, but not the wretched, forlorn, pathetic boy of the story. Goodwin, as *Fagin*, though obnoxious, was not terrible or even dangerous; an obvious scoundrel, without a gleam of *Fagin's* sardonic humor, without the weight of a formidably wicked character, without power, and drearily monotonous. In some particulars the performance showed traces of the well known manner of Tree. After *Fagin* had denounced *Nancy* to *Sikes* and had left the room, and *Sikes* had followed *Nancy* into an adjoining room, intent to murder her, *Fagin* returned, holding a lighted candle close to his face, so as to show it distorted by a diabolical grin of exultation, in the aperture made by partly opening the door. This Goodwin did, as Tree had done, killing the effect of the scene. *Fagin's* delirium, in the prison, was, in Goodwin's performance, mere screaming, and it caused no other effect than that of noise. The make-up was good, and the performance was consistent, evenly sustained, and such as might naturally have been expected from a practised actor.

A presentment of Mr. Carr's version had previously been made in New York, November 13, 1905, at Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre,—J. E. Dodson acting *Fagin*, and Amelia Bingham appearing as *Nancy*. The

performance given by Dodson was remarkable for scrupulous fidelity to fact, in minute details of execution, making the wretched *Fagin* painfully actual.

There are several stage versions of the novel. One that was used by prominent actors in America when the subject was new to our Theatre was from the pen of George Almar—of which Dickens said that it was contemptibly bad.

A version by John Oxenford, distinguished in his day as the dramatic critic of "The London Times," was produced at the St. James Theatre, London, in April, 1868, with Henry Irving as *Sikes*, Nelly Moore as *Nancy*, and John Lawrence Toole as the *Artful Dodger*. That version had been specially licensed. A condensation of it was subsequently made, for Toole, and that fine comedian, one of the tenderest and drollest spirits of his time, appearing as the *Dodger*, used it for many years. In New York a version made by Joseph Jefferson (*Rip Van Winkle*) was acted at the Winter Garden Theatre on February 2, 1860. That production I saw, and I was profoundly impressed by the performance of it. Matilda Heron impersonated *Nancy*, and she was in her element. That actress particularly liked to portray the struggle between the passion which degrades and the aspiration which exalts, and her method, at all times "natural,"—using literal means to a literal end,—was, in her performance of *Nancy*, completely unrestrained. Miss Heron did not possess either the massive person-

ality or the art of her illustrious predecessor Charlotte Cushman (who first acted *Nancy* in 1839), but she possessed a strange, wild beauty and an intensely passionate temperament, and she could let herself go—which, as *Nancy*, she did. George Clifford Jordan appeared as *Sikes*, but his simulation of brutality was not convincing. James William Wallack, the Younger, was the *Fagin*. A touching semblance of *Oliver* was provided by the pretty and interesting Ione Burke (she was the adopted daughter of Charles St. Thomas Burke, Joseph Jefferson's half-brother, who married her mother, Mrs. Sutherland). Tom Johnson, a clever young comedian, who died all too soon for his fame and the public gratification, made a hit as the *Artful Dodger*, and a thoroughly correct and exceedingly ludicrous and amusing image of *Bumble* was set forth by George Holland, the Elder.

The parts in the play in which various actors have from time to time acquired distinction are *Fagin*, *Sikes*, *Nancy*, *Bumble*, the *Artful Dodger*, *Charley Bates*, *Mrs. Corney*, and *Oliver*. Among the performers conspicuously associated in America with the part of *Sikes* are Charles R. Thorne, Sr., who was the original, at the Franklin Theatre; Peter Richings, John Dyott, Charles Fisher, George Clifford Jordan, George C. Boniface, Edward L. Davenport, John B. Studley, Louis James, Louis Aldrich, McKee Rankin, and Charles Barron. Names, aside from that of the brilliant Wal-

lack, which recur to memory in association with *Fagin* are W. H. Whalley, Charles Fisher, McKee Rankin, H. C. Carleton, and J. E. Dodson. (James W. Wallack, the Younger, is generally designated "Jr."; that is incorrect; he was the son of Henry Wallack and nephew of James William Wallack, the Elder—who was the father of Lester.) The first American *Nancy* was Mrs. W. R. Blake (Caroline Placide), and the catalogue of her successors includes, among others, the names of Charlotte Cushman, Fanny Wallack, Mrs. G. W. Jones, Mrs. G. C. Howard, Helen Western, Lucille Western, Fanny Morant, Annie Clarke, Rose Eytinge, Fanny Davenport, Elita Proctor Otis, and Nance O'Neill.

It was, in her time, the consensus of judicious opinion that the first distinctive and decisive "hit" made by Charlotte Cushman was made in the character of *Nancy*. That great actress, notwithstanding her fine intellect, her imagination, and her sensibility, could be exceedingly literal, and in that part she was so. She cast aside refinement. She simulated exactly the coarse manner and the vitiated nature of the wretched drab, yet at the same time she exhibited the passionate, inflexible fidelity of an intrinsically good and loving heart. It scarcely need be said,—certainly it is needless to those who remember her as *Queen Katharine*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Mrs. Haller*,—that Charlotte Cushman possessed a deep heart and a wonderful power to affect the emotions.

Her exhibition of the innate goodness of *Nancy* was unspeakably touching. The defect in her performance was an unconscious, unavoidable one—the revelation of a colossal spirit, an overwhelming force of character that in life would have raised her above the circumstances and persons associated with her and would have dominated them all.

It is recorded by the brilliant comedian Charles Mathews, one of the greatest of artists and one thoroughly conversant with the complex subject of dramatic art, that when, after long absence from the stage, Charles Kemble reappeared and gave a few performances in London, by royal command, the audience was “astounded by the perfection of his art,” that he was “a Triton among minnows,” and that “all the sucking *Mercutios*, *Don Felixes*, and *Charles Surfaces* had to hide their diminished heads.” “Let us have faith,” exclaimed Mathews, “that the great names which have been handed down to us were not achieved without good reason.” I am very far from being *laudator temporis acti* (I can truthfully, and ruefully, claim to have seen more bad actors than any other living man), but there is not, as far as I have been able to ascertain, any acting on our Stage to-day that could favorably bear comparison with acting that I have seen in the drama of “*Oliver Twist*.” If there is dramatic art in the peculiar field indicated such as was exemplified by Charlotte Cushman as *Nancy*, E. L. Davenport as *Sikes*, and

James W. Wallack, the Younger, as *Fagin*, I should be rejoiced to see it.

When Miss Cushman, in 1861, acted at the Winter Garden, in a round of parts, her embodiment of *Nancy*, which I then saw for the first time, was given with prodigious effect. The theatre was crowded and the audience, by turns moved to pity and thrilled by horror, received the representation with every possible denotement of sympathy and approbation. Miss Cushman had not played the part since her old Park Theatre days and she was heard to express surprise at her success in it. Wallack acted *Fagin*; John B. Studley, a dark, saturnine, but essentially amiable and genial man, whose forcible style as an actor, apart from his personality, was well suited to the character, played *Sikes*; William Davidge gave a perfect performance of the pompous, asinine *Bumble*; Mrs. George Stoddart was interesting and efficient as *Oliver*, and Johnson afforded much amusement as the *Artful Dodger*. The "realism" of the acting of Miss Cushman and Studley was, I recollect, afflicting. The climax of the murder was reached off the scene. Heavy blows were heard; *Sikes*, who had dragged out his victim, rushed wildly across the room and disappeared, and presently the dying *Nancy* crawled into the room, in the agony of dissolution, all bedraggled with blood—a horrid spectacle. That was thought to be "Nature"—and so it was; but it was as repulsive as it was afflicting.

Dickens, partly because of his passionate antagonism toward social wrongs and his inveterate resolve to expose them and promote the extirpation of them, and partly because of his defective taste—for he was too physically sanguine to be mentally fastidious—was commonly prone to exaggeration. Yet no person who has visited and observed the East End of London and obtained acquaintance with the shocking conditions there prevalent will perceive any exaggeration in the portrayal that the novelist made, in "Oliver Twist," of the squalor and hopeless misery existent in that section of the metropolis and of the vice and crime there engendered by want and woe.

The slavish devotion of *Nancy* to her blackguard paramour, *Sikes*,—bully, ruffian, drunkard, scoundrel, and ultimately murderer,—is not overdrawn nor in any degree false to nature. In that remarkable book called "Round London," by Montague Williams, Q. C., there is this passage, recording an incident that the author observed on a summer Sunday morning in Sclater Street, Shoreditch:—

"Among the crowd stood a young girl, of about sixteen years of age. Her face was terrible to behold. Both eyes were blackened and her cheeks resembled swollen pulp.

"'Why, Poll,' said one of her pals, 'how the —— did you get in that state? Wot cheer, lass? Why, who did that for you? Have a drink, my gal,' and he handed her a pint pot half full of porter.

"The girl, after taking a pretty long pull at the pewter, replied carelessly:—

"Why, my young man, of course. He couldn't have done much more if he'd been my 'usband, could he?"

"I shouldn't call 'im much of a young man,' rejoined her companion.

"Ah, well,' she said, 'if you loves 'em, Jim, you know you can take anything from 'em.'"

The same practical observer mentions having seen, at the London Hospital, a woman whose jaw had been broken by a violent blow, delivered by her husband, and he adds these words:—

"As she was taking her departure the nurse warned her that the slightest violence on her husband's part must be fatal; whereupon she exclaimed impatiently, 'Ah, ma'am, you don't know anything about it. You see, I love him with all my heart.'"

Among the early American performers of *Sikes* Charles R. Thorne, Sr., and Peter Richings were especially esteemed. Richings, in particular, was considered excellent, his impersonation, indeed, being regarded as equally meritorious, for fidelity to fact, with that of *Nancy* by Charlotte Cushman, in association with whom he acted.

In the minds of persons who have closely observed and deeply studied the art of acting there is, I believe, a propensity to endow great dramatic performances with the solidity of an actual substance. Certain great

achievements in acting that I have seen dwell in my recollection as substantial objects, and several of the most admirable examples of dramatic art that I recall are associated with the representation of "Oliver Twist." I remember, in particular, Edward L. Davenport's personation of *Sikes*.

Davenport was a manly, genial, kindly person, of fine and scholarly appearance, as little suggestive of *Sikes* or of the faculty to act *Sikes* as anybody could be; yet when he assumed that character he seemed the veritable embodiment of the surly, brutal, dangerous ruffian, not merely in physical appearance (such a transformation can easily be accomplished by any experienced actor), but also in mind and soul. Davenport's whole personality seemed to have become saturated with the brutality he portrayed, and his personation was consistent and without a flaw.

A single instance of his felicitous artistic treatment may serve to indicate the whole. In the scene in which *Sikes* is shown as convalescent from a fever induced by wounds he had received while attempting to commit burglary, Davenport was ominous and bitter in his reproaches to *Fagin* for neglecting him. *Sikes* is eating voraciously while he talks. *Nancy* comes to his side and kneels there. "I should 'a' died," the ruffian says, "but for this 'ere girl," and as he spoke Davenport, in a seemingly involuntary manner, as though the brute's arm were obeying a blind impulse of grateful animal

affection, deep in his sodden nature, pressed *Nancy's* head against his breast, at the same time and with the same hand striving to carry food to his mouth. Obstructed in that action, the brute seemed suddenly to become aware of his human weakness, resentful of it, and wrathful with the wretched creature who had caused it, and he roughly thrust the girl away. As long as memory endures Davenport's *Sikes* will live in it as a masterpiece of Hogarthian art, true as truth itself, in its faithful portrayal of a horrible type of the possible depravity of human nature.

Another performance which I remember with mingled pleasure and pain is that of *Fagin* by Wallack, often given in association with Davenport's *Sikes*. Wallack was a person of powerful frame, commanding stature, and peculiarly attractive and interesting aspect. The reader has, perhaps, observed the massive dignity of a noble lion. Wallack possessed that attribute. He was self-centred, not self-conscious. His features were regular, his eyes were gray, his face was handsome, his hair was dark, slightly grizzled, and flowing; his voice, in its natural tones, was strong, sweet, and sympathetic. He was one of the most amiable and kindly of men. When first seen as *Fagin* he seemed a busy, crafty, good-natured old Jew, furtive but not as yet villanous. The evil of his nature was disclosed little by little, and throughout the personation he utilized with exquisite skill his sympathetic qualities, so as to win a certain



From an Old Photograph.
In Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.
 EDWARD L. DAVENPORT.



From a Photograph by Damey & Son.
In Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.
 JAMES W. WALLACK, THE YOUNGER.

pity for the miserable, slimy wretch when he came to his frightful end.

The manner of Wallack, when *Fagin* is teaching *Oliver* how to pick pockets, was at once droll, benign, and baleful. He caused *Fagin* to assume a fatherlike manner,—to become an eccentric, benevolent, elderly person, of genial disposition. He trotted up and down the room, having a silk handkerchief in the tail pocket of his coat, which *Oliver* had been told to snatch without attracting its owner's attention, and when he said, "I'm a nice leetle banker, an' I'm agoin' to the city, an' I must be ve-ery careful o' the thieves, for I've lots o' mon-ney," his voice was soft, his demeanor playful and ingratiating, and his sly assumption of vigilance comic. The nefarious instruction was made a sport to the poor boy, and his failure in the first attempt to steal the handkerchief was treated as a joke. Beneath the simulated kindness and levity of the impersonation, however, there was revealed to the auditors a grisly spirit of wickedness and cruelty, and that spirit, on occasion, flashed forth, viperlike and frightful, as when *Fagin* denounced *Nancy* to the murderous *Sikes*. Seldom, perhaps never, has deadly malevolence found such consummate and hideous expression as it did in Wallack's acting, at that point. The crafty meanness, the relentless malignity, the seething hatred, and the blood-thirsty exultation in the accomplishment of a purpose of revenge were indescribably odious and awful.

Wallack's *Fagin* was more massive, melodramatic, afflicting, and dreadful than its original. His portraiture combined sardonic humor, heartless cruelty, low cunning, the hideous degradation of a burnt-out sensualist, avarice incarnate and shuddering superstition,—a compound, indeed, of all vile qualities, skilfully blended into a congruous, possible, exceedingly revolting character. His acting was, perhaps, most deeply felt in *Fagin's* final scene, which depicts that frightful creature's conduct in his last hour in the condemned cell and *Oliver's* visit to him. *Fagin* was shown behind an iron grill, frantic and awful, rushing to and fro in the cell, praying, cursing, and raving,—an object of dishevelled, seared, haggard, shattered humanity, shocking to see and indescribably piteous to hear. A low nature, incapable of repentance, oppressed by terror and remorse, utterly unstrung in the presence of death and delirious with desperation, surely was never better displayed and interpreted than it was by Wallack in that scene. The skill with which the actor contrived to diffuse through *Fagin's* ravings a suggestion of latent kindness in his nature and to make himself more an object of pity and less an object of loathing was truly superb. It was impossible not to feel sorry for the poor wretch, ignominious, bloody villain though he is, when, maddened by terror, he seized and shook the iron bars of his grated cell and wildly implored "little Oliver" to save him—"a poor old man, m' tear! a poor, 'elpless old man!" At his

best Wallack, in that scene, could, and did, stir his hearers to the very roots of being, and his achievement was the more admirable because absolutely a work of art, premeditated as to every detail and carried through with that perfect intellectual control of the emotions which is the decisive evidence and crowning glory of a great actor.

It is not always easy, even for experienced observers, to discriminate, as to an actor's personality, between that which is assumed and that which is actual. A reason for attributing, at least in some degree, the attributes of an assumed character to the actor who presents it is the fact—substantiated in experience—that, in many instances, actors most excel in the exposition of natures measurably sympathetic with their own. Yet there are numerous examples of the consummate dramatic art with which the most genial and gentle of men and women have made themselves seem to be monsters of depravity in the process of theatrical representation. The fine comedian John E. Owens, a man remarkable for the sweetness of his disposition and the refinement and gentleness of his nature—a sure index to goodness—was once acting *Uriah Heep*, in a stage version of "David Copperfield." A friend who had seen the performance begged Owens never to act the part again. "I saw you, John," he said, "and I hated you. When you made love to *Agnes* and tried to take her hand I felt as if I should like to kill you for a vile,

circumstances long fluent in a hidden drift and feelings long intensifying themselves in concealment break suddenly into view and become motives and vehicles of action,—that being the one absolutely and imperatively essential constituent of drama. The fruits of that rich genius are known, and as time speeds onward they will be more and more prized and honored. Thomas is a born dramatist. His skill has been matured by study and practice. His motives are pure. His aspirations are high. He has accomplished much, and he will accomplish more.

“ALABAMA.”

For the purposes of a dramatic author human life is to be viewed as a river which, for the greater part, flows underground,—only at intervals breaking forth into the light. Every character has a background. Every condition of individualism and of circumstance is consequent on a long line of antecedent facts. The dramatic instinct perceives the points of contrast, the moments of upheaval, will-conflict, action,—and a true dramatist shows human beings and human life as Fate shows them. His talent is not that of the novelist, which must take note of every detail. It eliminates. The perfect play can be likened to the new moon,—a clear and brilliant crescent, with the rest of the orb, dark but perfectly defined, in its arms. Your gaze is riveted by the superb sickle of light, but at the same time you

comprehend the whole planet. Thomas's lovely play of "Alabama," first acted on April 1, 1891, at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, exemplifies that truth, the author being possessed of the rare faculty of depicting human life not in picture but in action. The dramatist,—purposing to tell a story about a gallant soldier whom the chances of war had separated from his wife, who subsequently had died in giving birth to their child, of whose birth he had long remained in ignorance,—wrought in such a way as to allow essential incidents to reveal themselves in the light of dramatic contrast, as they would naturally do in actual life. Probability was not scrupulously considered. It is not probable that the husband and wife, *Henry Preston* and *Mildred Fairfax*, true lovers and strong characters, would have submitted to be separated; nor that either of them, when they had been separated, would marry; nor that *Henry Preston* would have remained for eighteen years in ignorance of the birth of their child; nor that, loving his father, *Henry Preston* would have remained, all that time, in exile from that father's presence and from the old home, no matter what causes of estrangement might have existed: and yet,—so strangely is truth at variance with likelihood in human life,—all those things were possible. The dramatist deemed them essential to his purpose, assumed them to be facts, and built on them. His story is acted, not related. It is romantic, it commingles humor and

pathos, and it imparts high ideals of character and conduct. The persons in it are distinctly individualized. The style of it is clear and crisp, and it possesses in a high degree the delightful quality of dramatic suggestiveness.

The South is the more picturesque part of the American Republic. The old social order at the South was more romantic, pictorial, and interesting than any social order at the North is now or ever has been. Thomas chose wisely in choosing a Southern plantation for the scene of his play. Much is dependent on climate, because climate affects character and manners as well as atmosphere and foliage. The investiture of the piece was delicious. You could see the large stars hanging in the deep, dark sky; the still streamers of gray moss, and the great fans of palm, and you could smell the scent of magnolia on the faint evening breeze. The persons charmed by languor of repose. The purpose was to set the easy, indolent, drifting temperament of the South in sharp contrast with the alert, expeditious, enterprising energy of the North. The social complexities, individual alienations, and changes and sorrows resultant on the Civil War were skilfully made a background for the picture. The haze of time has settled over that lamentable period in American history, and since it has grown more and more interesting in the retrospect it can be contemplated without rancor. The play of "Alabama" treats it fairly, indicating without

either partisan motive or aggressive morality the community of interest that should bind all sections of the Republic into one nation. *Colonel Preston* and his son *Henry* represent the two divisions of the land, and when at last they are reconciled their union points an obvious moral. The play is ardent with feeling, deftly elicited by the simple expedient of placing its chief characters in circumstances credibly pathetic.

"Alabama" was produced with a cast which included several of the ablest and most accomplished and interesting actors of the period,—James Huddart Stoddart, Edmund Milton Holland, Maurice Barrymore, Richard Fox, Charles L. Harris, and May Brookyn.

"COLONEL CARTER OF CARTERSVILLE."

The character of *Colonel Carter*, which is deftly depicted in a story bearing that name, by F. Hopkinson Smith, published in 1891, possesses the blended charms of simplicity, sweetness, and eccentric humor,—a soft enchantment, such as long has endeared, and will always endear, the kindred characters of *Parson Adams*, *Uncle Toby*, *Sir Roger de Coverley*, and *Colonel Newcome*. To know such a man as *Colonel Carter* would be to possess the privilege of associations at once cheering and humorous. There are persons who never see objects precisely as they are,—persons to whose vision every fact becomes transfigured by fancy. *Colonel Carter* is not an adventurer, yet he undertakes to live a prac-

tical life in a world of dreams, or, which is the same thing, a dream life in a world of fact,—and he succeeds in doing so because, being a charming eccentricity, he is also true. The insincere man who should pursue *Colonel Carter's* course would speedily come to ruin. It is the fortunate prerogative of goodness to command the respect of both good and evil. Human nature is sufficiently defective, but it has gentleness for that which is gentle, and it has affection for that which is simple, noble, affectionate, and kind. Those epithets describe *Colonel Carter*.

The play that Thomas made, on the basis of Smith's story, was produced at Palmer's Theatre, March 22, 1892. That play is frail, but the piquancy of the original narrative is preserved, the incidents are adroitly utilized, the dialogue is simple and fluent, the sentiment is sincere and unobtrusive, the action is various and brisk, and the spirit is pure. Coming, as it did, at a time when the Stage was being freely used for the dissection of turpitude and disease, that play came like a breeze from the pine woods in a morning of spring. The dramatist slightly varied the scheme of the novelist by adroitly weaving into the fabric a slender thread of amatory romance. *Colonel Carter*, in the play, is provided with a young female ward, and is made to fall in love with her. Men who have become elderly do, sometimes, feel that wound, and when they feel it they



From a Photograph.

In the Collection of Mr. Holland.

E. M. HOLLAND

as

Colonel Carter, in "Colonel Carter of Cartersville."

suffer. The girl bestows her affections on a youth who loves her, and the *Colonel's* apprehension of the true state of the matter affords him an accession of the magnanimity which, in all such cases, is supposed to provide the sufferer an adequate consolation. May should not mate with December. The suspension of the love interest during two acts of the play is its chief weakness, and it is a little impeded by detail; but keen dramatic instinct is finely displayed in the general conduct of the plot and particularly in the expedient of opening and closing the action on the estate which, incidentally, is imperilled and redeemed.

Scott, who anticipated much modern reflection, has noticed the temptation besetting every seeker for novelty to become extravagant in order to avoid being trite. That temptation might well have assailed equally the author of "*Colonel Carter*" and the actors by whom the play was represented. The story of a dreamer whose dreams accidentally come true might readily be presumed to lack zest and to require acute emphasis; yet neither in the structure of the piece nor in the performance of it was there any exaggeration. *Colonel Carter's* cheerful poverty seems the flower of opulence; his unconscious bewitchment of the astonished and delighted tradesman who calls for payment and does not obtain it; his feudal attitude toward the negro, *Chad*; his railway project, apparently visionary, but

strangely turned to unexpected substance; his preposterous duel; his garden in Virginia; his amazing and amusing Southern friends; his chivalrous spirit toward his patient, admirable sister,—unostentatious elements of a graceful fiction,—all are deftly blended in the play, and the acting was harmoniously simple and true.

Edmund Milton Holland (one of the many actors whom it has been my pleasant fortune to observe from the moment of first appearance on the stage) impersonated *Colonel Carter* and entered completely into the soul of the character. Holland is an actor of the school of Joseph Jefferson. He can be fine as well as bold, and can make the *condition* of a personality as positive and effective as the most brilliant stroke of its *action*—a rare and valuable felicity of dramatic art. His ideal had been clearly formed, and his expression of it, alike facial, vocal, and locomotive, was vigorous, and it strikingly evinced the excellent quality of artistic repose. He held every “point” just long enough to be comprehended, and never reverted to an effect once caused. He manifested the precious resources of a fine mind and a good heart,—without which no actor will endure,—and the charm of a whimsical drollery, thinly veiled by a sweet, grave, demure composure. His success was decisive. The *Colonel*,—with his remarkable black coat that could be adjusted for all occasions by a judicious manipulation of the buttons, his frayed wristbands, his shining trousers, his unconsciously forlorn

poverty, and his unquenchable spirit of hope, love, and honor,—was, in that remarkable performance, a picturesque, lovable reality.

“OLIVER GOLDSMITH.”

The most illuminative remark that has been preserved as to the character of Oliver Goldsmith is a remark made by himself, to the effect that when arguing alone he always got the better of the argument. He lived in a world of his own thoughts and feelings, and, although his company was liked by many persons, he was not a man for society, and he did not show for his actual worth in the companionship of other men. He was simple, awkward, almost clumsy, and he was acutely sensitive. Sir Joshua Reynolds thought that his extreme absurdity of behavior was to some extent intentional, but that is conjecture. He required an occasion, and, as a writer, he always rose to it. There are few things in the language more felicitous than his dedication of “*She Stoops to Conquer*” to Dr. Johnson. His “*Vicar of Wakefield*” and “*Deserted Village*” are classics. Boswell, who generally undervalues him, has, nevertheless, by mere record of incidents, shown him as one of the gentlest, most transparent, and most lovable of men. Dr. Johnson placed him in the first rank, whether as a poet, a writer of comedy, or an historian. His genius, said the Doctor, is great, but his knowledge is small. “Let not his frailties be remembered” (so wrote

that same noble and tender friend); "he was a very great man."

The droll comedian and gentle humorist Stuart Robson, who appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, on March 19, 1900, in the character of *Goldsmith*, was naturally sympathetic with the part, and he possessed many qualifications for an adequate interpretation of it, not the least of which were sweetness of temperament, sincerity of purpose, intellectual and moral worth, the spirit of a gentleman,—born, not made,—and a quaint, homely eccentricity of demeanor. The comedy, ingeniously constructed and agreeably written by Augustus Thomas, presents *Goldsmith* as a lover of one of the two *Horneck* girls who are mentioned, in the biographies of the poet as having been prominent among his friends, and whom certainly he held in high esteem. One of those girls became Mrs. Bunbury and the other became Mrs. Gwyn. There is no evidence that Goldsmith was enamoured of Mary Horneck or of any woman. Mrs. Jameson, who bestowed much expert attention upon "the Loves of the Poets," says that of the loves of Goldsmith we know nothing, and she conjectures that they, probably, were the reverse of poetical. When he was on his deathbed he said that his mind was not at ease, and it has been surmised that he was thinking of an unhappy attachment or a lost love. It may be so. Everything is possible. But, as he died poor and in debt, it seems probable that his distress was an honorable

solicitude rather than an amatory grief. "He had raised money and squandered it," said Dr. Johnson, "by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense." It was legitimate, however, that the dramatist should exercise his fancy in the treatment of his subject, and he did so to a good, practical purpose. The play may not be credible as history or biography, but it is a faithful and touching presentment of the ambitions, emotions, foibles, vicissitudes, and disappointments of a man of genius, and, incidentally, it suggests a picture of that fascinating literary group of which Johnson was the centre, with Burke, Gibbon, Sheridan, Garrick, Warton, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and Boswell ranged around him, giving lustre to the earlier period of King George the Third and leaving to posterity a legacy of imperishable beauty and renown.

If it be true, as said by Dr. Johnson, that the great end of comedy is to make an audience merry, Thomas attained to the great end of comedy in this play. It interests the mind and it touches the heart. Robson was more effective in the show of droll eccentricity than in the expression of tenderness, but, knowing that true love is always reverent, he expressed, with pathetic fidelity, the piteous endurance of a noble gentleman who must conceal his love and reject his happiness, because he thinks himself ungainly and unattractive, unfortunate and poor, and because he knows himself foredoomed to an early death. That is the

pivotal idea of the play. In Act First *Goldsmith*, flying from the image of *Mary Horneck*, blunders into the country house of a London citizen,—mistaking it for an inn,—where *Mary* is a guest, and where *Johnson*, *Burke*, *Garrick*, and others are also participants in the owner's hospitality. In Act Second he conducts a rehearsal of the comedy that he has written around this incident of his personal experience,—the comedy which is then and there named "She Stoops to Conquer,"—and he strikes down the libellous scribbler *Kenrick*, who has vilified *Mary Horneck* and himself in one of the dirty journals of the day. In Act Third he is arrested for debt, summoned to fight a duel in *Mary's* cause, vindicated against calumny, and, at least momentarily, blessed with the open approval of the woman whom he loves.

The incidents are simple. It is the sweet spirit with which the theme is treated that invests the play with charm, and that ought to endear it to everybody who cares for beautiful things. The great literary men of the Johnson period are treated with familiarity, perhaps distorted; but something has been preserved of the feeling of the Johnson era, and something has been suggested of the style of its gentry and its domestic life. Indications abound in Thomas's text of familiarity with Boswell's "Life," with Moore's "Sheridan," with Washington Irving's "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," and with the plays of the eighteenth century, and in an

episode relative to a cabman and a bailiff there is a reminiscence of a pretty little story, published about 1899, called "The Jessamy Bride." The play is diffuse in the last act, by reason of too much trivial incident,—retarding the climax and tending to submerge the pathos of the close in a rising tide of farcical nonsense; but it is a pure, lovely, ingenuous, clever, interesting play.

"THE WITCHING HOUR."

Superlatives, generally, defeat their purpose. The word "great," for example, has been misused to such a degree, in relation to the Stage and its professors, that it has almost lost its meaning. The writer who uses that word should feel sure of the propriety of its application. Thomas's play of "The Witching Hour," which was first acted in New York on November 18, 1907, at the Hackett Theatre (now, 1912, the Harris), is a *great* play. It is not a "lesson," a sermon, a treatise, a discourse, a debate, or a clinical diagnosis; it is a *drama*. The word "drama" (of which the significance often seems to have been forgotten or ignored) means something *done*, something that occurs in action. Thomas, in writing this play, distinctly and brilliantly exemplified that meaning. The action of "The Witching Hour" begins with its first word and ends only with its last one, so that, in its chiefly significant passages, it could be comprehended almost without the help of words. The subject is the esoteric influence of

mind upon mind, an influence independent of the usually recognized means of communication. That subject was not new, but the treatment of it by Thomas was novel, and that treatment framed a drama of engrossing interest. The period of "The Witching Hour" is contemporary (about 1906): the action passes in two rooms, one in Louisville, Kentucky, the other in Washington. The characters are distinct, individual, and veritable. The pivotal incident is an unpremediated, unintentional homicide. The situations are essentially dramatic, occurring in a sequence, each arising as a natural result of its predecessor, and the exposition of them is exceptionally skilful. The treatment applies the fact of mental communication and influence,—the fact of telepathy,—to probable persons and incidents, and the result is a delightful comedy, touched with romance, which, in the right method of dramatic art,—that, namely, of *suggestion*, not of monition or precept,—imparts ethical significance and intellectual pleasure, while deeply affecting the feelings.

Jack Brookfield is a "gentleman gambler." His sister and his niece, to whom he is devotedly attached, disapprove of his vocation. More than twenty years before the opening of the play the woman whom *Brookfield* loves has refused to marry him, because of his propensity for gambling, and has married another suitor. She has a son and, being now a widow, by name *Mrs. Whipple*, she returns to her native city, Louisville, Ken-



From a Photograph by Frank Bangs, N. Y. In the Collection of the Author.

RUSS WHYTAL

as

Judge Prentice, in "The Witching Hour."

tucky. Her boy loves *Brookfield's* niece, and is by her beloved. *Brookfield* favors their union, and he looks with disapproval on the suit of an acquaintance of his, a political office-holder, named *Frank Hardmuth*, who also is a gambler. Young *Whipple* has inherited an hysterical loathing and insane fear of the jewel called "cat's-eye." At *Brookfield's* house a tipsy youth forces one of those jewels on *Whipple's* attention, and persists in that wanton annoyance until, in blind, furious terror, the boy strikes at his tormentor with the first thing his hand touches,—a paper-cutter, made from a heavy ivory tusk, which has been left on a table. The victim is tipsy; the blows, struck heavily and wildly, fall upon his head, and he is killed. *Whipple*, within a few moments of his acceptance by the young woman whom he loves, is arrested for murder, and subsequently he is tried for that crime, convicted, and sentenced to death. The hereditary fear of the cat's-eye jewel is known to the boy's mother and to his friends, but it is not effective as a defence against the accusation. After the conviction a point of constitutional law is raised, on behalf of the condemned boy; the trial has not been held "in public,"—admission having been restricted to those holding tickets, and the tickets having been solely at the disposal of the prosecution, conducted by the disappointed rival, *Hardmuth*. The point is carried to the Supreme Court of the United States. One of the members of that tribunal, *Judge Prentice*, had been a rejected suitor

Judge Prentice is left alone and, his mind directed to the past by the appeal which has been made to him, wonders whether it is possible for a living human being to be influenced and guided by the spirit of a dearly loved person passed away, and, so wondering, murmurs the gentle lines of Bret Harte:

“The delicate odor of mignonette,
The ghost of a dead and gone bouquet,
Is all that tells of her story; yet
Could she think of a sweeter way?”

There must be great delicacy, rare perception, intrinsic goodness, and deep sympathy with beauty in the mind that can so truly see and so delicately portray such deep and fine feeling as is revealed in “*The Witching Hour*.” Some of the incidents and devices used by Thomas, since they deal with facts and theories not generally studied, were received with the scepticism and disparagement usual in such cases,—but much of the objection was the protest of ignorance against truth that is new or not understood. As to the subject of mental influence and communication, independent of the recognized channels of intercourse,—there is nothing supernatural in it, much that seems strange being only something as yet not comprehended. One of the chief elements of power in this play is the steadily dramatic and effective presentation of the story, regardless of the belief or disbelief, approval or disapproval, of the auditory as to the suggested premises on which it rests.

When the play was first acted in New York the author, speaking from the stage, said that he would agree with those who considered that in statement of the fact of telepathy in dramatic form he had been "fairly redundant." It seemed a singular attitude. There is nothing redundant in his play. Whether or not he had "a lesson" to "teach,"—and it has been said that he had,—he did not mar his play by precept. Ethical purpose was not obtruded. Ethical meaning can be deduced from the play,—and so it can from the fading of a rose or the setting of the sun. But the ethical meaning is implied, not asserted; it does not impede the action. It is possible to portray character without writing drama, but it is not possible to write drama without portraying character, and the character portrayal in "The Witching Hour" is exceptionally fine.

The acting of that play, when first produced, was wellnigh perfect. John Mason's acting of *Brookfield* was impressive with the authority of intellectual character, repose, and consistency, admirable with distinction, extraordinarily fertile in suggestion of wide, often painful, experience of life and of the faculty of close observation, delightful with artistic finish, and deeply sympathetic because of absolute sincerity and innate refinement. Russ Whytal as *Judge Prentice*,—manly, tender, fervent, distinguished, with an occasional flicker of the fiery spirit of youth,—added a veritable gem of impersonation to the galaxy of theatrical triumphs which will

always be treasured in memory. George Nash's personation of *Hardmuth* was wonderfully effective, possessing the merit of conveying a something of amiability along with the violent weakness and repulsiveness of that character, and thus making credible anything like friendship between *Hardmuth* and *Brookfield*, who is a man of unusual intellect. The contrast of that which is serious, even tragic, with that which is comic, even trivial, is well made and its effect is profound. It will be interesting and instructive to see whether "The Witching Hour" will stand the test of Time, because it is, in many passages, written in dialogue, here and there colored with slang, strongly characteristic of its period.

"AS A MAN THINKS."

By the writing of his play entitled "As a Man Thinks,"—a great comedy which, in many respects, was greatly acted, in its presentation at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, March 13, 1911,—Thomas provided an occasion for earnest, thoughtful, grateful praise. The play is a permanent addition to the practical resources of the Stage, whether it be considered as a fabric of action or a fabric of thoughts and words, and the influence of the play is a potent, decisive, far-reaching benefit to society. The purpose of the dramatist,—a purpose clearly shown and completely and brilliantly accomplished in this comedy,—was to tell an interesting and significant story, involving persons and scenes

probable and representative in contemporary social life; to set in a strong light the folly of a maintenance of racial antagonisms, and to reiterate, by felicitous dramatic example and by the vital and tremendous power of suggestion, the true doctrine,—to which he had more than once before expressed devoted adherence,—that the welfare of humanity depends on the diffusion of gentleness, refinement, a forgiving spirit, benevolence, and good thoughts, between man and man. As a man thinks so does he find his environment fashioned and colored, and therefore it is of the first importance to him that he should think rightly, kindly, charitably, and well. The comedy is not a sermon, not in the least dreary with moral platitudes, and it does not contain any cant, either that of virtue or that of vice: it teaches,—but its teaching is like that of Nature, insinuating, subtly influential,—and the spectator of it is not only charmed and buoyed by the spell of continuous interest, but made seriously thoughtful, prompted to a kindlier disposition, touched at the heart and elevated in the mind. There is, in the mechanism of the play, some slight enforcement of the occurrence of incidents, causing them to happen fortunately for the safe conduct of the plot, but such enforcement is, and always has been, essential in a work of dramatic art,—a work that, for the purpose of brief representation, must condense within a narrow compass feelings, experiences, deeds, and events which, in actual life, are, almost

invariably, diffused over a considerable extent of time. It would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to name a better example of expert and felicitous dramatic construction than is provided by this comedy.

The picture is one of troubles in domestic life, and the central theme is the terrible passion of jealousy. The place is New York City and the time is the present. Thirteen persons,—eight of them prominent, the others incidental,—are involved in the action. Four of the eight persons are Jews, the others, theoretically, it can be assumed, Christians, and much forcible effect is obtained by the adroit use, respectively, of intercurrency and contrariety between members of the different races. The dominant character is *Dr. Samuel Seelig*, a Jew, and it is upon this character that the dramatist, while not neglecting any of the subsidiary parts, has expended the utmost wealth of his thought and feeling and laid the chief weight of emphasis. The domestic troubles are represented as sequent on the marital infidelity of an American husband, *Frank Clayton*, and on the dishonorable conduct of a slippery Jew bachelor, *Benjamin de Lota*, and the four acts of the comedy,—which are tersely and pungently written,—portray the progress of those troubles and therewithal the gradual mitigation and ultimate effacement of them, through the wisdom, authority, and charity of the manly, prudent, magnanimous, and splendidly balanced character of *Dr. Seelig*.

The jealous anger of *Mrs. Clayton* impels her, foolishly but not criminally, to place herself in a compromising position with the Jew *De Lota*. The jealous anger of *Frank Clayton*, when that fact has been made known to him,—the medium of the impartment, ingeniously contrived, being a fortuitous relation by his wife's father,—causes him to denounce and repudiate her, so that she leaves his house, with their son, a child eight years old, and, temporarily, finds a refuge in the home of their friends, *Dr. and Mrs. Seelig*. *Clayton* subsequently learns that *De Lota* was a suitor to his wife in her girlhood, and he foolishly grasps at the maddening belief that she has been false to him from the first, that *De Lota* has been her paramour, and, in fact, is the father of her child. In a scene contrived with splendid skill and conducted with such fidelity to nature as to create a perfect illusion and cause the theatre to be forgotten *Dr. Seelig* is enabled to cause *Clayton's* mind to be disabused of all his wrong, wretched, monstrous suspicions, and is successful in reuniting the alienated husband and wife. Meanwhile *Vedah Seelig*, the *Doctor's* daughter, who has been betrothed to *De Lota* but has never entirely trusted him, breaks her engagement and privily weds a young Christian American, *Julian Burrill*, an artist, and the noble Jew, her father, is thus subjected to a trial (the marriage of his daughter outside the Hebrew race) which he cannot sustain without deep suffering,

but to which, finally, he is indicated as submissive, in that sweet sincerity of benevolence of which he is an incarnate image. It is not by novelty of thought that Thomas charms in this remarkable play, but by the exceedingly happy and powerful dramatic expression of it. The simplicity of the story is not only matched but exceeded by the elementary truth of the principles which it suggests for the conduct of life. "As a man thinketh," says *Dr. Seelig*, remembering the precept of the founder of the Christian faith. "There's nothing either good or bad," says *Hamlet*, "but thinking makes it so." "Yesterday is dead," says the wise and kind Hebrew; "look forward." "Let us not burthen our remembrance with a heaviness that's gone," says *Prospero*. "Let the dead Past bury its dead," said the poet Longfellow, and his exquisite romance of "Hyperion" was written around that admonition. The whole philosophy of Emerson, which revolutionized religious thought in New England and more or less broadened the mind of the country throughout its extent, is grounded,—in as far as it is grounded anywhere,—on the central idea of emancipation of the Present from the *burdens* of the Past. There is nothing new in this teaching, and Thomas's fine play, in the ethical import of it,—even in the bearing it has upon the institution of marriage and the relation of the sexes,—only echoes truths that have long been reverberant through the backward arches of Time; nor does

it pretend to do anything else. John Mason, the principal actor in it (whose performance of the Jew has not been matched, in many a year, for power of feeling and beauty of artistic finish), seemed, indeed, to think otherwise, for, in a newspaper interview, he said: "*Dr. Seelig makes a point that has never been made before*, which is that the whole structure of modern society rests on man's faith in woman's virtue." The speech in the comedy in which that declaration is made is an exceedingly eloquent and fine one, controverting the impulsive assertion of an excited woman, naturally and rightly resentful of the injustice often shown toward her sex, that "*this is a man's world*," and declaring the essential fact that, in our society at any rate, *this is a woman's world*. But the thought, among English-speaking races, is very old, nor would it, perhaps, be too much to say that it is as old as civilized society. It is not in novelty of ethical ideas, right and good though his ideas are, that Thomas gained his magnificent stage victory, but it is as a dramatist, making a grand use of representative types of human nature to enforce the ascertained principles of true philosophy and instill them into the public heart.

Many dramatists, from Shakespeare onward, have, occasionally, made the error of marring objective art by the impulsive interjection of subjective speeches. Thus, in *Macbeth's* soliloquy, beginning, "She should have died hereafter," the poet suddenly takes the place

of the character and deftly illustrates the evanescence of human life by the figurative example of "a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more,"—a simile characteristic of Shakespeare, but not at all characteristic of *Macbeth*. Thus, again, in "Rip Van Winkle,"—sometimes ignorantly disparaged as a bad play, whereas it contains many of the most essential elements of drama, and is an exceedingly good one,—the wistful, half-dazed vagrant, when confronting the phantoms, in the Ghost Scene, is made to ask the chieftain of the spectral group: "Have you any dumb girls?" and to make the wholly inappropriate and jarring comment, "If you had some dumb girls, what *wives* they would make!"—the paltry gibe of Dion Boucicault, but when spoken by the awed and forlorn *Rip*, trying to be brave, entirely out of place in that scene of tremulous mystery,—a scene almost as weird as that of *Hamlet's* visitation, at midnight, on the ramparts of the castle of Elsinore. And thus, finally, in this comedy of "As a Man Thinks," the pure, sweet, gentle *Vedah Seelig*, half an hour after her marriage to the man whom she loves and who loves her, and in his presence and in that of her mother, being reproached for not having delayed her wedding, is made to reply: "What? Trust a sculptor *alone*, in *Paris*, for a *year*!" It causes a laugh, of course: "some quantity of barren spectators" would laugh if the girl were caused actually to flout her mother: but really it is a jeer of the

author, in a momentary mood of flippant cynicism, not the answer natural to the lovely girl whom he has, otherwise, delineated so well. Such blemishes are, however, only specks on the marble, made the more visible by the surrounding whiteness.

In John Mason's embodiment of *Dr. Seelig* the observer was aware of a man who is presented to contemplation not as *acting* but as *living*—which is the perfection of an actor's art. *Dr. Seelig* is past middle age, and his experience of life has been ample. He knows mankind and he is fully acquainted with the ways of the world: he has been superbly educated: he has the wonderful experience of human nature which comes to a great surgeon, and which only a great character can possess without sinking into cynicism and disgust. Mr. Mason completely identified himself with this character, and there was, in his demeanor and speech, the noble dignity of inherent virtue, the solidity and poise that only long experience of life can bestow, the restful calm of conscious power, the readiness to meet every exigency of circumstance, the suggested capacity to endure, the wide, multi-colored background of what a man has passed through and learned and been. The personality was rich, calm, sympathetic, not demonstrative, but such as gains respect without effort, obtains obedience without severity, and prompts reliance without question. The reposeful manner of a physician who has been long in practice was wonderfully well

assumed and consistently maintained, and with that manner was deftly blended the ease of an accomplished man of the world. The natural, seemingly involuntary modifications of bearing toward different persons,—toward the beloved wife, the petted daughter, the young artist, the elderly *Judge Hoover* (who loathes Jews, though a little inclined to make an exception in the case of the *Doctor*), and the unhappy *Clayton*, both as friend and patient,—were made with a perfect sense of fitness and with indescribable propriety and grace. The level speaking was diversified by fine inflections of tone, sometimes whimsical, sometimes playful, sometimes mildly satiric, always correct and appropriate, while in what may be called impassioned moments, when injustice and vice are to be rebuked and virtue is to be defended, the actor's vocalism rose with his emotion and became touchingly impressive. In Mr. Mason's embodiment of *Dr. Seelig*,—because all the attributes of the character were comprehended and made concentric, and because the free and fine expression of that character was made inevitable,—the audience saw a perfect performance. Also it saw a brilliant and delightful example of a style of acting that was existent in a former period, when yet the traditions of comedy survived which had been handed down by such actors as Henry Placide, James E. Murdoch, James W. Wallack, John Gilbert, and William Warren. That was the period in which John Mason's



From a Photograph by Hall, N. Y.

In the Collection of the Author.

JOHN MASON

as

Dr. Seelig, in "As a Man Thinks."

professional life began; while his style in his own,—as that of every artist becomes, when fully developed,—he showed, distinctly and unmistakably, the fine influence of those old traditions. He gained great success, and he made a mark which will long endure.

APPENDIX

I.

IBSENITES AND IBSENISM.

*"And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite."*

—MILTON.

CONSIDERATION of the dramatic movement in America requires that some attention be given to the works of Henrik Ibsen, the influence they have exerted, and the views and proceedings of those persons who have approved, advocated, and practically participated in making them known to our reading and theatre-going publics.

Henrik Ibsen was born at Skein, Norway, on March 20, 1828, and he died at Christiania, on May 23, 1906. In youth he felt the rigor of extreme poverty. At one time he was apprentice to an apothecary. Later he was for a brief period a medical student,—facts which, perhaps, account, at least in part, for his propension for morbid, clinical subjects and for the pseudo-scientific medical elements which occur in several of his most widely known compositions. In 1857 he became man-

ager of the Norwegian Theatre, in Christiania,—a position from which he retired in 1862, the theatre being thrown into bankruptcy. In 1864 he withdrew from his native land, in high dudgeon, having been refused a pension from the government. In 1866 he produced, in Rome, his play of "Brandt," which was accepted as an arraignment of Norwegian morality, and the government pension, granted to him in that year, is said to have resulted because of it. After leaving Norway he dwelt for extended periods in Rome, Munich, and Dresden, but eventually returned to Christiania. There are at least five biographies of Ibsen published, in English,—the chief being those of Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen and Georg Brandes.

Ibsen's first play was "Catiline," written in 1849: his last, "When We Dead Awaken," published in 1900. In the interim of fifty-one years he contributed articles to several periodicals, participated in political controversies and disturbances, sought to influence social development by advocating social theories which, practically applied, would destroy Society, and he concocted about thirty verbal fabrics in the Play form. His earlier plays are sometimes called "romantic and poetical." Romantic they are, in a certain degree, because they mingle wildly improbable incidents in a maze of extravagant fancy and tumid verbiage. Of poetical quality they contain nothing, unless it may consist in a verbal felicity of their original form, which does not appear in the translations.

He wrote poetry, however, and is esteemed as a poet.

The chief example of Ibsen's earlier writings that has been made known on the American Stage is "Peer Gynt," produced, 1906-'07, by the late Richard Mansfield,—the exertions incident to whose endeavor to vitalize that nonsense having hastened his untimely death. "Peer Gynt" was presented in many cities, in 1907-'08, by Louis James,—who, also, soon afterward perished. The mortality among auditors is unknown; presumably it was extensive.

The works of Ibsen upon which, chiefly, the claim is based that he is a great thinker, a great dramatist, and destined to exert a great influence on posterity, are his "Sociological Dramas,"—the more prominent of which are "The Pillars of Society," "A Doll's House," "Ghosts," "An Enemy of the People," "The Wild Duck," "Rosmersholm," "Hedda Gabler," "Master Builder Solness," "Little Eyolf," "John Gabriel Borkman," and "When We Dead Awaken."

"Rosmersholm" and "Hedda Gabler" have been considered in this work, in the section devoted to the acting of Mrs. Fiske, the most intellectual, able, and influential performer identified with Ibsenism on the American Stage. Other actors, beside those already mentioned, who have ventured on that murky sea are Helena Modjeska, Beatrice Cameron (Mrs. Richard Mansfield), Kate Reighnolds Winslow, Janet Achurch, Elizabeth Robins, Mary Shaw,

Florence Kahn, Ethel Barrymore, Alla Nazimova, Wilton Lackaye, and Frederick Lewis. Ibsen has found other conspicuous advocates, in America, in the allied spheres of criticism and drama. Those whose views are most germane to this work are persons directly associated with the Theatre. Such of Ibsen's "sociological dramas" as are here to be considered can most conveniently be examined in the chronological order of their important presentation in the American metropolis. The first of them, accordingly, is

"A DOLL'S HOUSE."

There are no infallible rules for play-writing, but certain principles of dramatic composition are simple and obvious. Either a play is intended for the Stage, or it is intended for the Closet. Either it is meant to be acted, or it is meant to be read. If intended for the Stage it must possess action. If intended for the Closet it must possess literature. There are plays which are good to act and also good to read, because they contain both action and literature, but such plays are few, and whenever they are acted much of their literature has to be cut out of them. A complete play,—a play that can be acted,—is an interesting story of human nature and human life, actual or ideal, delicately exaggerated, and told by means of action more than by means of words. An incomplete play,—a play that cannot be acted,—is a narrative, put into the form of dialogue and

embellished by virtues and graces that are solely literary. "Othello" and "The School for Scandal" stand at the one pole; "Comus" and "Festus" at the other.

Ibsen's play called "A Doll's House" is good neither for the Stage nor the Closet, for it is slow and tiresome when acted and trivial when read. It contains one dramatic situation, but one dramatic situation is not enough to animate the structure of a three-act piece. In 1883 "A Doll's House" was produced, in Louisville, Kentucky, under the name of "Thora," by Helena Modjeska, who acted the heroine, but, although the brilliant talents of that actress were then at their meridian, it was a failure. In 1888 it was tried in London, under the auspices of a few crotchety writers, and there it gained some favor with the *Mrs. Leo Hunter* class. Since Beatrice Cameron's revival of it,—in Boston, October 30, 1889; in New York, January 28, 1891,—it has been sporadically revived and has achieved a kindred favor with a kindred class. A few superior persons, especially in Boston, have declared it surcharged with superlative meaning,—such, of course, as transcends the comprehension of all except the elect.

In "A Doll's House" Ibsen directs attention to a case of domestic trouble. The scene is a dwelling-house in Norway. The time is 1879. The chief persons are *Mr.* and *Mrs. Helmer*, who have lived together eight years, who love each other, have children, and are in comfortable circumstances. They have a male friend,

appropriately named *Rank*, who is dying of spinal disease, who is in love with *Mrs. Helmer*, and who calls on her every day and shows how foolish and pitiable a man can be when he is infatuated with a woman. They have a female friend, named *Mrs. Linden*, a widow, who drops in, from time to time, and helps *Mrs. Helmer*. *Mr. Helmer* has been appointed manager of a bank. It is Christmas Eve, and all appears to be well with the family of *Helmer*, save that *Rank* has a cough and is rickety upon his legs. But there is a skeleton in the closet. *Mrs. Helmer*, at an early period in her married life, has secretly borrowed money for her husband's use, making him believe that she had obtained it from her father,—and she has forged her father's name, in order to obtain it. That debt, thus dishonorably and disgracefully contracted, she is endeavoring to pay. But that crime of hers is known to her creditor, *Mr. Krogstad*, a bank-clerk, whom *Mr. Helmer* has discharged from the bank; and *Mr. Krogstad* threatens to tell *Mr. Helmer* about *Mrs. Helmer's* forgery unless *Mrs. Helmer* procures his reinstatement in his official post. That reinstatement the frightened *Mrs. Helmer* vainly endeavors to obtain. *Mr. Helmer*, who is a narrow-minded, opinionated, conceited person, insists on having his own way, and *Mr. Krogstad* remains banished. Thereupon *Mr. Krogstad* sends a letter, which is dropped into *Mr. Helmer's* letter-box, wherein are stated the facts of *Mrs. Helmer's* misconduct. The progress of

that letter toward the hands of *Mr. Helmer* is, for a time, retarded, the means whereby the delay is made constituting the one moment of dramatic action that illumines the piece. *Mr. Helmer* eventually opens and reads the letter, is astounded and enraged, and he announces his feelings to *Mrs. Helmer* in terms of violent asperity. *Mr. Krogstad*, in the meantime, has become mollified by the soothing influence of *Mrs. Linden*, who, having been his sweetheart and having jilted him in early life, has now proposed marriage to him, and he sends *Mrs. Helmer's* forgery to *Mr. Helmer*, and declares the matter settled. *Mr. Helmer* is delighted; but *Mrs. Helmer*, much displeased with her husband's conduct, declares that her eyes are at length opened to his essentially commonplace character, and that she cannot live with him any longer, and she terminates the proceedings by walking out of his house at midnight,—totally regardless of her duty to their innocent children, whom she thus callously deserts,—closing the door after her, with a bang. That is the play.

"A Doll's House" is not dramatic but didactic; an essay, not a play. The author undertook in it to indicate a necessity for revision of the matrimonial relation. Married women, he declares, are dolls,—meaning playthings. Married men are a combination of the Turk and the Prig. Wives are not allowed to possess identity. Husbands absorb the personality of their wives. The female sex is subjugated and extinguished. That is a dreadful

carpenter, actually the offspring of *Alving's* blackguard sire and a female servant. The devoted, widowed mother of that youth is shown as the long-suffering victim of precedent years of horror and of the circumstances thus indicated, and, incidentally, as the renounced idol of a clerical ass, named *Manders*,—with whom, however, she signifies her willingness to cohabit. The climax of this noxious postulate is the collapse of young *Alving* under his mysterious disease, and his afflicted mother's removal of him from this vale of suffering by means of a poisonous dose of morphine. This revolting fabric is tendered for public approval as being freighted with a "lesson," and it has been accepted and extolled as though it were new,—notwithstanding the fact that centuries before the Prophet of Corruption emerged in Christiania it was recognized and recorded that the sins of the father are visited on the children, and that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

Objection to this choice gem of decadence has subjected the objectors to much contumely. Its admirers announce it as "tragic" and "terrific." It is, in fact, an indefensible and shameful vagary of a diseased fancy. Objection to it cannot be invalidated, because that objection rests on incontestable grounds. Conduct consequent on disease may be, incidentally, admissible as an expedient in drama,—as much so, for example, as conduct resultant on a broken leg. But exposition of loathsome disease resultant from sexual immorality is not

a proper subject for theatrical display. Furthermore, Ibsen's presentment of it is not dramatic but didactic, and it is prolix and drearily barren. And, finally, his treatment of the subject is distorted, radically false, and misleading, imparting no reliable information, but, in its totality of effect, befouling the mind, dejecting the spirit, and doing no sort of good. Thus it lacks even the scant justification of being a sound, scientific clinical treatise. For those reasons the work is radically immoral.

The apostles of Ibsenism are continually blarneying about "truth" and "frankness." They ought, accordingly, to be favored with both. No reasonable person doubts or denies the existence of frightful "social diseases." It has long been recognized that those diseases work incalculable harm, blast thousands of lives, cause suffering, death, and, worse than death, madness; worst of all, that their consequences often fall heaviest upon unsuspecting, helpless innocence. No one disputes the need of extirpating them. The day will come, and it will not now be long in coming, when authentic information about them will be widely disseminated, through proper channels and in a wise manner, among all classes, and when individual coöperation will do much to eradicate the social injuries fluent from them. Meantime such subjects as are treated in "Ghosts" are peculiarly unfit for "discussion," of any kind, before the miscellaneous theatrical audience of both sexes, all ages, and widely varying degrees of intelligence.

The Ibsen Drama seldom affords opportunity for acting,—a chief reason being that most of the characters in it are so radically false to nature, so entirely arbitrary creations of the author's perverse and morbid fancy, that they cannot be impersonated. The interlocutors walk in and talk till they are tired, telling each other what, generally, they already know, and then walk out; and presently they come back and talk some more. Persons accustomed to the stage can readily perform such tasks. Miss Mary Shaw, who is the chief performer on our Stage of *Mrs. Alving*, in this obnoxious piece, has long been known as an actress of distinct but not exceptional talent and of much vigor. In that part she displayed the proficiency and repose of an old actress; the ability to murmur softly, to make a good simulation of middle-aged maternal tenderness, deftly to employ the stare of abject misery, and to speak scorn with a nice inflection. Indeed, Miss Shaw did more with such a word as "pitiful" than ever the sonorous parson did with "Mesopotamia,"—but no admirer of talent could fail to grieve at seeing a woman so clever engaged in a work so noxious and so absurd. From the beginning of her activity as a theatrical mentor of society Miss Shaw has shown signs of taking a more serious view of herself than anybody else ever has taken or ever will take. Her purpose in producing Ibsen's "Ghosts," according to her published proclamation on the subject (so eminently coherent and rational, in so far as common-

sense can appreciate and weigh it), was "to educate the public palate up to an appreciation of mankind's real inconsistency," and to make the drama "an engrossing form of instruction in the vital truths of life";—those vital truths being that "the world is a sordid, narrow-minded, pinchbeck little world"; that society wears "a grinning mask" to cover a state of seething corruption; that the weakness of humanity was never, till the arrival of Miss Shaw, fully comprehended; that under the surface of things there are "awful facts," and that "truth," when "naked" (as, of course, it never is and never has been, except in the plays of Ibsen), is "a horrible, distorted *Hyde*, which reflects perfectly the immutable course of nature." Such a purpose of instructive benevolence,—so sane, so original, so suitable to the Theatre, and so likely, when prosperous, to diffuse so much comfort,—could only be viewed with the homage of grateful acceptance.

"THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY."

The candid Scotch clergyman was not far wrong who, noting that King David "said, in his haste, all men are liars," remarked that if the Psalmist had been living in these days he might have said it at his leisure. It is an old jest; but an old jest is often more apt than a new precept. Most persons, presumably, are aware that, in all communities, and especially in strait-laced, provincial circles, there are moral impostors; sanctimo-

nious humbugs, hypocritical pretenders to virtue and respectability; in short, whited sepulchres. This is the very alphabet of social knowledge, and everybody knows it—who knows anything. Accordingly, when such a puerile and elementary composition as Ibsen's "The Pillars of Society" is placed on public view in a theatre the observer can only wonder whether any human being will for a moment suppose it to be a novelty, or, for any reason whatever, think it worthy of respect.

Ibsen, according to this attenuated colloquial platitude, "The Pillars of Society," had made the profound discovery that, in some cases, men who pretend to be honest, and, by means of their deceitful gravity, and decorum, gain a social ascendancy and general esteem, are, in reality, knaves, and that the pillars of society are, for this reason, rotten at the base. The Norwegian philosopher's friend and admirer Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen stated the case for him, with some emphasis, in a book that was published about twenty years ago, declaring that the Ibsen mission is "to drag moral ugliness into the light of day" (there being so little of this sweet thing anywhere visible, and such a ravenous public desire and need of seeing specimens of it), and that Ibsen thinks "morality is out of plumb," the foundations of the social fabric are "sagged," and everything going pell-mell to universal smash. In "The Pillars" there is a loquacious merchant, *Consul Bernick*,—outwardly respectable, actually a libertine, a swindler, and

a scoundrel,—who allows and contrives that an innocent relative, *Johan Tonnesen*, shall be a scapegoat for his offences, and even frames a plot to drown him, in self-defence,—going on from one depravity to another, till at last, suddenly shocked into virtue, from having, as he thinks, sacrificed the life of his son, he publicly confesses his sins, and says he is sorry for them. That is the play; and its only parallel, for dulness, must be sought in some other of the prosy, fatuous colloquies of the same tedious author.

There are wrongs. There are abuses. There are bad men and women. There are infirmities in human nature. "The best of all we do and are, just God forgive!" cries the poet Wordsworth. There are hypocrites. "This is a wale," as remarked by *Mrs. Gamp*, and those who "are born in a wale must take the consequences of such a sitiuation." But society is not for this reason radically and hopelessly vitiated. Even a Moral Regulator can sometimes refrain from being a Bore. Henry Arthur Jones, enforcing the same trite ethical lesson urged by Ibsen,—that fraud is a rotten basis for the support of character,—did succeed, with his play of "Judah," in making and exploiting a dramatic plot and writing a genial, animated, sparkling, delightful *drama*. But Ibsen, habitually raking among diseases and deformities and continually alternating between trash and platitude, is either tainted or trivial,—usually both. His play of "The Pillars" is made up of prolix conversations,

the wretched tittle-tattle of a provincial town embellished with merciless ethical disquisition, having the general effect of a rudimentary moral treatise. Some of his moon-eyed followers have adopted the ridiculous practice of yoking the Tupper of Christiania with the Bard of Avon. Alas, poor Shakespeare! This much of good, however, comes from the hare-brained impertinence,—that observers are reminded of the contrast, and so made to remember that there are single lines in Shakespeare worth whole hecatombs of Ibsen.

“The Pillars of Society” was first produced in America, in the German language, at the Irving Place Theatre, New York, on December 26, 1889, with Ernst von Possart in its central part, that of *Consul Bernick*, and it was first acted here, in English, at the old Lyceum Theatre, by pupils of the Lyceum Theatre School of Acting, associated with several professional actors, on March 6, 1891. On the latter occasion George W. Fawcett appeared as *Bernick*, Alice Fischer as *Lona Hessel*, and Elizabeth Tyree as *Drina Dorf*. On April 15, 1904, that robust, sincere, forcible, and expert actor Wilton Lackaye revived “The Pillars” at the Lyric Theatre, and appeared as *Bernick*. Mrs. Fiske brought it out, at the New Lyceum Theatre, appearing as *Lona*, and presenting Holbrook Blinn as *Bernick*. Mr. Lackaye’s presentation of the play was the best that has been given on our Stage, because his impersonation of *Bernick* was absolutely faithful to the radically stupid

original. He had the necessary frigidity and the requisite bland, plausible manner of a selfish, self-satisfied, successful hypocrite, and he expressed effectively the trepidation, in moments of peril, of a scoundrel and liar who dreads impending exposure. There is nothing more that can be done with the part.

"AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE."

It is notable, with regard to "independent," "progressive," and otherwise "advanced" stage societies, that they customarily "progress" by the exploitation of freaks. One of those societies, in New York, having sought the seclusion of the old Berkeley Lyceum, on February 10, 1905, tackled Ibsen's treatise on the rights and wrongs of the Minority, called "An Enemy of the People." That is the only presentment of the play in America which I recall: probably it has been performed elsewhere, by other votaries of fog. It is a colloquial rigmarole relative to a case of imperfect drainage in a small town on the south coast of Norway. *Dr. Stockman*, who resided in that town, discovered that certain Baths which had been established there, instead of being medicinal and salutary, were poisonous to health, through having become polluted by sewage, and thereupon he wrote a newspaper article on the subject, which a local journalist promised to print. *Dr. Stockman's* brother, however, who was a local magistrate, and who owned a pecuniary interest in the Baths and did not care

whether they caused illness or not as long as they were used and he derived money from their use, persuaded the journalist not to keep his promise, and *Dr. Stockman's* article was, therefore, rejected. The *Doctor* resented this cowardly slight, and thereupon called a public meeting of the townspeople, in order to read his essay to them, thus making known the danger of using the Baths; but his opponents took possession of the hall and "howled him down," and the assembly broke up in a row. *Dr. Stockman*, subsequently, was discharged from his town office, and "boycotted," as "an enemy of the people,"—the prosperity of the town being deemed dependent on that of the Baths,—and he resolved to open a school for ragamuffins. Ibsen has told this enlivening tale in five acts which have the sprightliness of the mud turtle and the agility of the sloth.

In Robertson's comedy of "School" one of the children, being asked in what way the people rewarded the public services of Belisarius, replies that "they deprived him of his dignities and put his eyes *out*." The man who tries to serve and improve society often comes to grief: "the property of rain is to wet and of fire to burn." An instructive essay, doubtless, might be written on the blunders of the majority, human selfishness, and the absurdly erroneous postulates that all persons are born equal and that the masses of the people, simply because they are masses, are therefore virtuous, wise, and infallible in judgment. No more

monstrous lie has ever been promulgated and accepted than the lie which declares that "The voice of the People is the voice of God." Ibsen, obviously, was conscious of those elemental truths, and his mind seems to have been distressed on that subject when he wrote "An Enemy of the People." He wished to announce that the majority has might but not right. In doing so, in this instance, through the inappropriate medium of the Stage, his fundamental defect as a dramatist,—vagueness made tedious by verbal prolixity (aside from his infatuated devotion to a monotonous and unscientific doctrine of heredity),—is obtrusively manifested. The Regulator loudly vociferates that "the world is out of joint" and seems to feel it a "cursed spite that ever he was born to set it right." It is.

"MASTER BUILDER SOLNESS."

Foggy symbolism, immersed in illimitable prolixity of commonplace dialogue, is the substance of "Master Builder Solness," known to our Stage as "The Master Builder." It is one of the dreariest fabrics of the crotchety Ibsen Muse, being a shallow "psychological study," not a play, and, being a "psychological study," it ought, whether shallow or profound, to be restricted to the library. To find a parallel example of flatulent obfuscation the student must seek the commendatory drivel written on the subject by the crack-brained Maurice Maeterlinck. The reader of "The

Master Builder," if endowed with patience, might derive from its perusal a certain soporific edification: the spectator of it is conscious only of being wearied beyond endurance by the purling prattle of a group of nonentities and invalids. The method of the author, in that work, has been likened to that of Nathaniel Hawthorne; but Hawthorne had style, and, in his "The Scarlet Letter" and "The House of the Seven Gables," which are representative works, he revealed imagination, and he provided feeling, atmosphere, incident, and interesting character: moreover he did not write for the Stage, and he explicitly stated, in a letter which I once possessed, that he did not consider his writings suitable for dramatic interpretation. Ibsen's method is no more like that of Hawthorne than the flow of sawdust out of a bunghole is like the drift of storm clouds in an autumn sky.

In this Ibsen fabric *Mr. Solness* is a skilful and successful architect, past the prime of life, and likewise he is an egregious egotist. He possesses "the artistic temperament," and, as frequently happens in such cases, there is in him a strong vein of sensuality. "I know you have known a good many women, in your time," says his medical acquaintance, *Dr. Herdal*: "Oh, I don't deny it," replies *Mr. Solness*. He is married to a good woman, whom he has ceased to love, who is a nervous invalid, patient in her suffering, and with respect to whom he entertains a remorseful feeling,—fancying that

he has caused her to be unhappy by wishing or hypnotically "willing" that other women should love him, or by allowing his artistic ambition or his desire for personal aggrandizement to prevail over his domestic affections and extinguish them. Such a state of mind is chaotic,—especially as shown in an Ibsen play,—and it cannot be clearly designated. "Goodness knows," exclaims *Dr. Herdal*, after listening to *Mr. Solness's* tale of disquietude, "I don't understand at all." No wonder! The fact, apparently, is that the popular architect is an unsatisfied sensualist, corroded by vanity, yet not so devoid of conscience and sensibility as to be free from self-reproach and indifferent to the ordainment of rectitude. In actual life such a man would be,—as in this Ibsen talking-match he certainly is,—a domestic and social nuisance. Morbid, selfish egotism, forever brooding on its sensations and forever solicitous as to its importance, presents about the sorriest spectacle that human nature can show. There are persons so completely wrapped up in themselves that they can believe that the Creator of the universe bestows constant personal attention on all their proceedings. About the time that "The Master Builder" was obtruded on public attention (by Alla Nazimova, at the Bijou Theatre, September 23, 1907), a New York clergyman, of some local prominence, bulged into public prints with the statement that he "smokes tobacco and leaves the question of the propriety of that proceeding to God,"—a

truly gracious condescension! There is no limit to human vanity. If Ibsen, in portraying *Mr. Solness*, intended to depict a colossal, representative Bore, he succeeded: but it was not worth while.

The story of the piece, in as far as it has any story, relates that *Mr. Solness*, having completed the building of a church tower, mounted to the top of that structure, and, amid festal decoration and the acclaim of a joyous multitude, placed a floral wreath upon it,—much delighting, by that “steeple-jack” performance, a precocious maiden, named *Hilda Wengel*, whom, subsequently, after he had become vinously exhilarated, at a banquet given in his honor, he fervently embraced, bending her head backward and kissing her many times, and promising to make her “a Princess”; that ten years later, when *Miss Wengel* had grown to ripe womanhood, she sought and entered his abode and installed herself there as a lodger,—not much to the satisfaction of the observant but meek and sick *Mrs. Solness*; that she routed *Mr. Solness’s* book-keeper, a young woman named *Kaia Fosli*, who was in love with him,—nourishing a passion which he mesmerically encouraged but did not practically reciprocate,—and swept her from the house; that, ultimately, after frequent conversations with *Mr. Solness*, concerning his domestic experience and his discontent with everything (unless, perhaps, the memory of certain rapturous osculations), she managed, by way of showing her power over him and preparing the way

for a final conquest, to compel him to repeat his aërial exploit of earlier days; and that, after crowning the pinnacle of a habitation which he had built for his own abode, *Mr. Solness* became dizzy, lost his balance, and fell to his death upon a stone quarry, the exuberant *Miss Wengel*, meantime, wildly shouting "I heard harps in the air."

There is supposed to be an ocean of occult meaning in all this,—which the reader is recommended to deduce, at pleasure. To some of the elect it typifies the prevalence of a younger generation over its predecessors,—that is to say, the spirit of progress. James Huneker, an ardent apostle of Ibsen, thinks it "a true interior drama" and feels that, having, indirectly, caused *Mr. Solness* to topple off the top of a tower and break his neck, *Miss Wengel* is well entitled to call him "*My—my Master Builder*," because, thereby, she "has created his soul anew." The lucid Maeterlinck, in a choice specimen of his limpid utterances, informs us that in

"dealing with 'The Master Builder,' which is one of Ibsen's dramas wherein the dialogue of the second degree attains the deepest tragedy, I endeavored, unskilfully enough, to fit its secrets. . . . 'What is it,' I asked, 'what is it, in 'The Master Builder,' the poet has added to life, thereby making it appear so strange, so profound, so disquieting, beneath its trivial surface?' [What, indeed!] . . . He has freed certain powers of the soul that have never yet been free, and it may be that these have held him in thrall. . . . *Hilda* and *Solness* are, I believe, the first characters in drama who feel, for an instant, that they

are living in the atmosphere of the soul; and the discovery of this essential life that exists in them, beyond the life of every day, comes fraught with terror. . . . Their conversation resembles nothing that we have ever heard. [!!!!] . . . A new, indescribable power dominates this somnambulistic drama. All that is said therein at once hides and reveals the sources of an unknown life."

This wonderful fabric, indeed, can mean anything and everything you like. On the stage it has, practically, no meaning whatever. The persons implicated are, practically, unintelligible. They wander in and out, but they do nothing. They utter many words, but they say nothing. The piece provides no opportunity for acting, but only for the confused display of passing moods. *Mr. Solness* is continually in a state of fretful uneasiness, sometimes exhibiting solicitude, sometimes peevish discontent, sometimes querulous ill-temper. The auxiliar parts associated with *Mr. Solness* and *Miss Wengel* are mere feeders to their colloquy. The presence of *Dr. Herdal*, who has nothing to do with the theme, but only leaks in and out of the conversation at intervals, is chiefly suggestive of a regret that, being a doctor, and, presumably, acquainted with the salutary uses of colocynth and calomel, fresh air, exercise, and cold water bathing, he does not employ those remedies to regulate the liver of *Mr. Solness*, clear his mind of the pribbles and prabbles of jaded nerves, and thus end, or at least mitigate, his egotistical loquacity. The

actual purpose of *Miss Wengel* does not become apparent until toward the end of the piece, and even then it is but vaguely indicated. Her ultimate design appears to be sensual. She seems to intend to subdue this master-builder, this victorious and distinguished person, and to enslave him. The postulate, in Ibsen's mind, seems to have been that a handsome, daring, buoyant, unscrupulous young woman can, as a rule, do anything she pleases to do with almost any man she pleases to select as the victim of her fascination. There is nothing particularly novel or striking in that announcement. History and biography abound with examples conclusively expressive of its truth. Plutarch truly said that the soul of a lover lives in some one else's body: one of the most expressive and pathetic touches in his splendid life of Antony is the simple record that when that chieftain, following Cleopatra's ignominious flight, abandoned the battle and boarded her galley he went forward without seeing her, and sat in the prow, silent, covering his face with his hands, and so remained for three days. Complete surrender and enslavement to a woman, with the consciousness of the weakness thus implied, are strikingly revealed in that abject figure of desolation. If the Norwegian author desired to glance at that posture of experience, and to declare that the finer the nature the greater is its peril, he might have accomplished his object with fewer words and in a manner far more direct and effective than he used in

"The Master Builder." If he had no such design he might wisely have concluded his opaque deliverance with *Don Quixote's* summary exclamation, "Heaven knows my meaning! I'll say no more!"

The style of the translation into English, made by Edmund Gosse and William Archer, is consistently vapid. The dialogues trickle on, with the deliberate fluency of cold molasses. Such phrases as "*one* doesn't," "*one* can," "*one* would," etc. (why not give *two* a chance, now and then?), are of frequent occurrence. The execrable phrase "later on,"—which is both bad English and stupid affectation,—is freely employed, and that much overworked word "awfully" is pressed into service, the heroine stating that she is "*awfully* fond" of her father. In the performance of *Miss Wengel* by Mme. Nazimova there was nothing remarkable aside from its brilliant animation and variety of feminine enticements and pretty wiles. The actress used the customary blandishments of her sex,—which are not difficult to use and are either captivating or melancholy, according to the eyes that see them; but she showed herself a competent performer; she satisfied the requirements of the character of *Miss Wengel* by being lithesome, maintaining a buoyant demeanor, and by suffusing her speech and movement with a kind of elf-like singularity and feverish ecstasy. In speaking she made fritters of the English language and contorted her face in making them. The essence of the part is vanity, reinforced by

animal exuberance and an indescribable delirium, partly erotic, partly sentimental, and partly devilish. Ibsen is said to have met, when an old man, with a female who suggested this character. The aged bard must, indeed, have had some singular experiences of feminine eccentricity.

“LITTLE EYOLF.”

“Little Eyolf” was first conspicuously acted in America by Alla Nazimova. This actress is a Russian who has acquired an imperfect command of the English language, and whose singularity of appearance and eccentricity of demeanor have for several years made her an object of public curiosity. In 1910 she was director, in association with the Messrs. Shubert, of a theatre in New York then bearing her name, but now (1912) known as the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre. On April 18, 1910, she revived “Little Eyolf,” and performed in it, as *Rita Allmers*,—Brandon Tynan appearing as *Allmers*, Robert T. Haines as *Borgheim*, and Ida Conquest as *Asta Allmers*.

“Little Eyolf” is one of the gloomiest and most drearily didactic of all the Ibsen plays; but coupled with “An Enemy of the People” it shows the Norwegian dramatist at his best,—such as it is. The subject of it, apparently, is human responsibility under inexorable moral laws. The author seems to have believed,—or at least to have intended to intimate the opinion,—that, in

mortal experience, reward or punishment, happiness or misery, is directly awarded to each and every individual in exact accordance with that individual's merit or fault. *Rita Allmers* represents amatory passion for her husband, in almost frantic excess. She must be, physically and mentally, the one object of his idolatry. Against whatever obstacle intervenes between them she opposes herself with a fierce resentment. Her love is voracious, her jealousy vigilant and wild. The specific sources of her burning discontent and bitter antagonism are the half-sister whom her husband loves, the book that he is writing, and their only child, little *Eyolf*,—to whom *Allmers*, after considerable neglect of the boy, has declared himself peculiarly and exceptionally devoted.

Allmers, who has married *Rita* not for true love, but because allured by her physical beauty and for the sake of her wealth, typifies morbid and belated conscientiousness. He has chosen, as a vocation, the task of writing on the literature of moral philosophy, but he presently suspects himself of being a failure in it,—a suspicion not without reason, as he often talks like a lunkhead, acts like a fool, and accomplishes nothing. He is more at ease in the society of his half-sister, *Asta Allmers*, than in that of his wife, whose insistent, exacting ardor has begun to cloy and repel him. The "half-sister" *Asta*, who proves to be not a relative (being the child of his step-mother's adultery), is in love with him, and is enduring and concealing, as well as she can, the corro-

sive agony of her tortured heart and afflicted mind. *Asta* is beloved, and sought in marriage by a kind, good, energetic, practical, commonplace man, named *Borgheim*, a civil engineer, to whose love, however, she can only partially respond. It is stated, in a colloquy of bitter recrimination, that the infant *Eyolf*, temporarily neglected by his parents,—when they were absorbed in connubial intercourse,—rolled from a table and was hopelessly crippled by the fall; whereupon *Allmers*, blaming his wife for her passionate enticement and himself for responding to it, has been impelled, through late awakening of the moral sense under pressure of cumulative, afflicting self-reproach, to dedicate his life to the service of that child.

An elderly female, whose employment is to lure and drown rodent vermin, by playing on “panpipes” and rowing out to sea,—whither the vermin, as alleged, follow her because they do not wish to do so,—figures briefly and “symbolically” in the domestic scene of discord, cross-purposes, passion, and misery upon which this group of sufferers is displayed, and seems to be intended to indicate that a malign agency of accommodation waits on every evil wish of the human mind,—though, in presence of Ibsen’s “symbolism,” it is ever prudent that normal minds should not be positive, since even the experts in it seldom agree as to its significance. Frenzied resentment of her husband’s devotion to *Eyolf* causes *Rita* to express a wish that the child “had never

are quickly responsive to hysterics. Very little of the text, as spoken by Mme. Nazimova and by some of her associates, reached the ear of the auditor, except as partially unintelligible sound, but perhaps that should be remembered as a mercy. On the other hand, there was a superabundance of the booming elocution of *Allmers*, represented, in a monotonous form of oratorical woe, and with marked Hibernian aspect and intonation, by Mr. Tynan. Seldom have wretched persons had more to say, or been more industrious in verbal prolixity, than the grief-stricken, passion-tossed, moon-eyed interlocutors in this crazy drama.

SUMMARY.

Ibsen has been thrust upon the English-speaking Stage as a Dramatic Messiah, charged with a New Revelation, another Moses emergent from the celestial Presence with a message for mankind, paramount to all other messages that have ever been received. He is, we are assured, the foremost dramatic influence of our age, penetrating all nations and affecting all minds, and society is summoned to bow before this stern and awful Scandinavian person and learn at last the truth. It has come to pass, furthermore, that to disregard that summons, to dissent in any degree from the proposition that Ibsen was a great dramatist and that his dramas ought to be universally acted and admired, is to incur the hideous penalty of denunciation as a reactionist and a foggy.

Yet Ibsen is not a dramatist, in the true sense of that word, and Ibsenism, which is rank, deadly pessimism, is a disease, injurious alike to the Stage and to the Public,—in as far as it affects them at all,—and therefore an evil to be deprecated. The didactic tendency of which, in his group of “sociological plays,” Ibsen is a principal exponent is pernicious, for the reason that it is a tendency to represent human nature as radically and universally vile and human society as hopelessly corrupt. “I go down into the sewers,” said the Norwegian writer, and “my business is to *ask* questions, not to *answer* them.” So be it. But, whatever be the motive, *why* should the product of an exploration of “sewers” be exploited through the medium of the Theatre? Granting to Ibsen and his followers the highest and best motives, they have altogether mistaken the province of the Theatre in choosing it as the fit medium for the expression of sociological views,—views, moreover, which, once adopted, would disrupt society. There are halls to be hired. There is an audience for the lecture,—if lecturing would serve any good purpose. There are societies of learned men who study sociology and are ever ready to accept illumination on the subject, from any one who can provide it. Why inflict the Stage with inquiry as to “original sin,” or the consequence of ancestral wickedness, or the moral obliquity resultant from hereditary disease, or the various forms of corruption incident to vice and crime? Since when did the

Theatre become a proper place for a clinic of horrors and the vivisection of moral ailments? It is easy to say, as was said by the despondent, hysterical, inflammatory Jeremiah, in the Bible, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. But what good have you done when you have made that statement? As a matter of fact it is only half true. There are in the world many kind, pure hearts and noble minds; not a day passes without its deeds of simple heroism; not an hour passes without some manifestation of beautiful self-sacrifice, splendid patience, celestial fidelity to duty, and sweet manifestation of unselfish love. There must be evil to illustrate good, but in art, and emphatically in dramatic art, it must be wisely selected. The spectacle of virtue in human character and loveliness in human conduct will accomplish far more for the benefit of society than ever can be accomplished by the spectacle of imbecile propensity, vicious conduct, or any form of the aberrancy of mental disease. Sunshine and flowers are more propitious than darkness and weeds. It has been well said that "the knowledge of human nature which is exclusive of what is good in it is, at least, as shallow and imperfect as that which is exclusive of what is evil."

As a moral philosopher Ibsen stultifies himself: "My business is to *ask* questions, not to *answer* them!" Did Ibsen seriously suppose,—do his advocates seriously suppose,—that the defects of Society were unknown or

unregarded before he noticed them? A moral philosopher, if he is to be of any use to the world, must do something besides "ask questions,"—something more than amble in the streets vociferating "rottenness, sin, and iniquity!" Ibsen's sociological plays neither impart nor enforce helpful significance as to the social themes they present: they suggest no improvement. Their author was not only dreary and dejected himself; he was the cause that dreariness and dejection are in the minds of all clear-brained thinkers who study his writings. His ability, such as it was,—and it was not extraordinary,—entitles him to fair recognition, which he has received, but neither Ibsen's ability nor that of any other individual is of the slightest practical value to the public unless, whatever be the medium of expression, it is used for the public good. The need of the world is direction and assistance, and its honor and reverence are due to those who help it. Ibsen's "philosophic" plays are intolerable,—one reason being that they deal not with characteristics, but with symptoms: in the expressive phrase of Wordsworth, they "murder to dissect." A reformer who calls you to crawl with him into a sewer, merely to see and breathe its feculence, is a pest. As a thinker, as a moral philosopher, as a commentator, as an artist, whether in writing or in life, Ibsen was so far below and so far behind such a man, for example, as the great novelist and true reformer Charles Reade (whose moral enthusiasm was

almost unique, and whose perception of moral obliquity and social injustice was only equalled by his wrathful, scorching antagonism of them, in sympathy with human goodness, potential and actual), that it would be an insult to Reade's memory to institute any comparison between them.

It has already been noticed that the accomplished actress Mrs. Fiske has been more influential than any other member of the dramatic profession in America in the encouragement and practical support of the Ibsen movement. It must always be difficult to comprehend why this should be so, because Mrs. Fiske possesses a good repertory of old plays and has shown judgment and taste, when she so pleased, in acquiring new ones. The befogging effect, even on a vigorous intellect, of surrender to Ibsenism is well illustrated by the published remarks on Ibsen made by that actress. Mrs. Fiske observes that "as the principal characters in an Ibsen drama were living many years before the visible presentation, the producer of an Ibsen drama must delve into the childhood of those characters, and discover and comprehend all that has gone before." Since that is true as to the stage treatment of all characters that are worthy of serious consideration in any and every play, the appliance of the principle to Ibsen's colloquial fabrics serves only once more to suggest Dr. Holmes's familiar insect which "says an undisputed thing in such a solemn way." Not since the erudite

Erving Winslow, of Boston, made known the illuminative fact that Ibsen is such a "pure and sweet writer" that, in preparing his works for public reading, he found it necessary to reject some of them altogether and to "excise" others, has such a singular example been shown of apparent inconsistency between opinion and conduct as that presented by Mrs. Fiske, who has declared that the character of *Hedda Gabler* (in the Ibsen play of that name) at once "*illustrates a very obvious lesson*" and "*requires years of study to master its meaning*"; and also that "the auditor of 'Hedda' does not know what the play means, perhaps," but that "*no one of Ibsen's characters can be on the stage five minutes without being fully revealed*"; and if the auditor of the paradox will study it he will be aware of "a great awakening of his mental forces"! And further, when it is recalled that Mrs. Fiske has publicly expressed the conviction that Ibsen, "by his example as well as by his work *has almost banished beauty, nobility, and poetry from the Stage,*" and that his influence (necessarily) is "baneful," her persistence in sustaining that "baneful" influence must cause some slight perplexity of the observer's understanding. After such illuminative and conclusive testimony of apostles, there is little needed from opponents to explain and sustain inveterate, incessant opposition to Ibsenitish misuse of the drama.

The case for Ibsenism, in as far as there is any

case, has not been urged more ardently or insistently than by Harrison Grey Fiske, for many years owner and editor of "The New York Dramatic Mirror," and advocacy of it by that authority can rightly be accepted as comprehensive and representative.

"Truth will not down," says Mr. Fiske, "and the speaker of it must, sooner or later, be heard. Ibsen is *the apostle of truth*, and his dramas mean something that is human. *Much of his dramatic motivity is aberrant, but aberrancy, unhappily, is a strong characteristic of humanity itself, under the artificial standards that have sought to control impulse. . . .*"

Precisely. What, then, are those tyrannous "artificial standards" and what "impulse" is it that they have sought to control? It requires very little investigation to discover that the "artificial standards" are the social conventions which, gradually, have been evolved and established for the advancement and welfare of civilization and the elevation of man from the state of a mere animal, while the "impulse" which those impediments "have sought to control" is man's animal propensity to gratify all his "natural" desires, regardless of consequences to individuals or to society, and especially to act, in relation to the female sex, with complete disregard of the duties and restrictions that make civilized society possible. Such conduct is thought to be "emancipated,"—a glorious vindication of "individualism." "Impulse," it appears, is

something which should not be controlled. Social law is "artificial." Aberrancy, since it is "a strong characteristic of humanity itself," must be viewed with a certain tolerant tenderness, as motivity in the acted drama. According to the Dictionary "aberrancy" signifies "a wandering from the right way," or, in morals, "a deviation from rectitude"; and, therefore, in describing much of Ibsen's motivity as "aberrant," his admiring advocate is exactly correct,—though his approval of that "motivity" seems a little mysterious. Approve of it, however, he does, for he declares that "Ibsen is the apostle of truth"; and, incidentally, he bestows a word of pity on "minds that *may be* sane and balanced on all other subjects, but that, quite plainly, do not grasp the meaning of Ibsen, or appreciate the value of his work."

Nothing has been more fully demonstrated by the experience of mankind than that a work which is distinctly moral in its platitudinous precept can be, and frequently is, potently immoral not by reason of what it preaches, but by reason of what it exhibits. This fact, however, is beyond the comprehension of a certain order of mind, and, consequently, those persons who, acting on conviction, have opposed the Ibsen movement, as a movement pernicious alike to morals and to art, are denounced as "abnormal moralists," "prurient purists," and "sentimental back-numbers." The study of Ibsen seems to infect his "all or nothing" admirers with

a mental confusion kindred with his own,—or perhaps, it is a mental confusion kindred with his own that makes them his admirers. "Ibsen's men and women," says James Huneker, "*offend those who believe the Theatre to be a place of sentimentality or clowning.*" That may be true—or false. Credible testimony on the subject could come only from persons, whosoever they may be, who entertain such a silly belief. But some of the plays of Ibsen and his kind *do* offend persons who respect the Theatre, when maintained as a place for pure drama and fine acting; a place in which, while presenting the widest variety of right subject,—tragedy, comedy, farce, melodrama, burlesque, musical comedy, pantomime, or spectacle,—nothing can be shown or discussed which is outside the legitimate province of art, or offensive to the general sense of decency, refinement, and good taste.

Much encomium has, from time to time, been printed, relative to the alleged supreme "technique" of Ibsen's plays, but particular elucidation of it is not provided. A disquisition is not a play. There is more true *drama* in Wills's "Olivia," Young's "Jim the Penman," Thomas's "The Witching Hour," and McLellan's "Leah Kleschna" (though the latter is overfreighted with didacticism and marred by a weak last act) than there is in a round dozen of the works of Ibsen. The beneficent effect of a work of art can operate as subtly as that of sunlight: it certainly is not less sure. The injurious effect of a perversion of art can operate as subtly as

does the infection of disease: often it is not less harmful. All persons who chance to be exposed to disease are not necessarily infected. There is, however, no room to doubt the benefit or to question the need of sunlight. The province of art is the ministry of beauty, and beauty, in art, is inseparable from morality. That is the only ground on which the existence of art can be incontestably justified. As long as that doctrine is assailed, so long will militant assertion of it be required, and at no time has insistence on it been more essential than now, when every horror of the passing hour and every freak that can be seized on as likely to catch public notice are, more than ever heretofore, appropriated for exploitation in the Theatre.

"The immorality of these plays is so well concealed that only abnormal moralists can detect it. These plays are not *sex dramas* at all, in the sense that Sardou's dramas are." Thus Mr. Huneker. Quite true, in as far as the latter proposition is concerned,—though false and impudent in the former. As far as known nobody has described them as "sex dramas." Immorality, in its worst aspects, is not a matter of sexual relation between men and women. Some of Sardou's plays represent not only the great, fundamental attribute of drama,—that of action,—but also they represent the crime, suffering, and lethal catastrophe that frequently, and naturally, proceed from illicit conduct, and often they interest the mind (and therein are hurt-

ful, because vicious), and sometimes, while they interest, they do not offend. Ibsen's dramas, when treating of the relations of sex,—notably in "Hedda Gabler," "Rosmersholm," and "Ghosts,"—treat them as affected under the reaction of disease, and thus they fill the mind, whether of the reader or the auditor, with disgust and gloom: they pervert life: they tend to disseminate misinformation, augment ignorance, and mislead weak or ill-educated minds, and therein they are immoral.

Ibsen's admiring advocate Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, in summarizing facts relative to that author, wrote: "In all Ibsen's *attempts to break down the code of traditional ethics* his method has been to *devise a glaring exception*, in order to *invalidate the rule*." That is a method of logical procedure which recalls the Highlander's astonishing gun, mentioned by Scott, that "only required lock, stock, and barrel to make it *perfect*." Further Boyesen observes that Ibsen's mission "is to drag moral ugliness into the light of day." Well—he did not altogether fail in his "mission"! An uglier lot of beings than are most of the characters in the Ibsen plays will not be found short of *Gulliver's* voyage to the land of the *Struldbrugs*, whom the gloomy, cynic Dean Swift described as "opinionated, peevish, covetous, morose, vain, talkative, incapable of friendship, and dead to all natural emotion."

The most essential attribute, whether for a dramatist or a philosopher, is clarity of thought and state-

ment. In that respect the writings of Ibsen are conspicuously deficient. Among his most devoted followers there is dissension as to his meanings, one of them, indeed, not hesitating to declare, as a merit, that the bard himself very likely did not always know precisely what he meant. Nevertheless, it is claimed that an author who could not,—and certainly did not,—state his own thoughts clearly ought to be recognized and exalted as a leader of the thought of the world. The commonplace element in literature, as it stands forth in its true colors, can be endured, but when it vaunts itself or is thrust upon thoughtful attention as genius, originality, and power it becomes intolerable. Ibsen, as a writer of a number of variously flaccid, insipid, tainted, obfuscated, and nauseous plays, could be borne, although, even in that aspect, he is an offence to taste and a burden on patience, but Ibsen obtruded as a sound leader of thought is a grotesque absurdity. As a dramatic writer he distorted almost everything he touched. Not since the halcyon days of Tupper, when the reading world was gravely apprized that “a babe in the house is a well-spring of pleasure,” and was expected to be thrilled by that announcement, has such a torrent of mingled imbecility and commonplace been poured into print as is found in the writings of that crazy theorist; and not since Tupper’s noon of notoriety as the prophet of milk and water have the disciples of any literary exotic ventured to vaunt him as a philosopher, with nothing

to sustain the pretension except a mass of crotchets and platitudes.

Strange assertions are made by the Ibsenite. "The form of the Ibsen plays," says Mr. Huneker, "is compact with ideas and emotions. We don't usually go to the Theatre to think or to feel." That assurance may convey the truth as to Ibsenites: there is abundant reason for supposing some of them to be incapable of either feeling or thought; but, in view of the decisive fact that, primarily and essentially, the acted drama always does and always must appeal to the emotions and then to the mind, that is, to the intellectual faculties, what should be thought of the mental condition which makes it possible for such a statement to be made? If it is not *feeling* enforced by *thought* that brings tears to the eyes at a performance of "Lear" or "Becket" or "Sweet Lavender" or "Alabama" or "The Middleman"—what, in the name of common sense, is it?

"And for the ideals, dear to us, which he [Ibsen] so savagely attacks, *he so clears the air* about some old, familiar, mist-haunted ideal of duty, *that we wonder* if we have hitherto mistaken its meaning!" Amazing sage, who "so clears the air" that we are left "wondering" whether we have (or have not) mistaken the meaning of an ideal of beauty! "His [Ibsen's] are *not* closet dramas, to be leisurely digested by lamplight; conceived for the Theatre, actuality is their key-note; his characters are pale abstractions on the printed page"; yet

"Ibsen's dialogue *is clarity itself* and closely woven, it has the characteristic accents of nature. *Read, we feel its gripping logic . . .*" The "gripping logic" of characters which are "pale abstractions on the printed page"! The fact meanwhile is that Ibsen's persons all talk alike, all talk like Ibsen, and that Ibsen invariably talks like a person of fluctuating mental disorder. It is as difficult to obtain a distinct meaning from an Ibsenite as it is to derive from the writings of Ibsen a lucid statement of precisely what he means. Around *what* "old, familiar, mist-haunted ideal of duty" has Ibsen "cleared the air"? And what is a "mist-haunted ideal of duty"?

A final objection to this author is that, apart from the lack of fitness in his themes, he does not discuss his subjects in a fair manner, looking at both sides of the question, and without specious special pleading. "He is determined" (still Mr. Huneker) "to tell the truth about our microcosmic baseness." If so, why does it happen that his determination generally eventuates not in truth, but in falsehood? Does it follow, because a Caligula and a Faustina once existed, and still, perhaps, are possibilities, that all men are monsters and all women bestial wantons? Are there no unselfish persons? Ibsen, we are assured by the same authority, "made his report of the human soul *as he saw it.*" In that, clearly, he was within his right: but, since his report was to be inflicted on the public through the medium of the Stage, it is greatly to be regretted that

his optics were not in a healthful condition. Mental astigmatism is an infirmity, not a talent, and the "report" is not the less misleading and injurious, because inadequate through lack of perception, than it would be if false through deliberate intention to deceive. Furthermore, even in his misrepresentation of human nature, Ibsen was not original. Cynics have always existed, and Dean Swift's report of the human soul as *he* saw it,—a report made nearly two hundred years ago (1727),—far transcends that of Ibsen not only in every particular of technical expertness of expression, but in melancholy incompleteness, purblind censoriousness, gross falsehood, and ignominious censure. The excuse, or at least the explanation, for Swift is—incipient insanity, which terminated in madness. The explanation of Ibsen, likewise, is, unquestionably, a disordered brain.

One great error of dramatic "reformers" lies in the basic assumption that change necessarily signifies improvement. Often it is recession. Achievement in the future may excel achievement in the past. It was long ago observed by a wise observer that "we know not what a day may bring forth." Let us hope that the new day will provide dramatic writers of greater and finer ability than has ever been manifested and that the art of acting will attain to a loftier height than it ever yet has reached. Entertainment of that hope and endeavor to realize it will not retard advancement! There are many adverse influences, but in the strife

between good and evil good is destined ultimately to prevail. Great minds will be born, and noble thoughts will impel to noble endeavor. The movement of the world is onward and upward, but that movement has never been helped, and it never will be helped, by any such gospel of disordered mentality, distrust, despondency, bitterness, and gloom as that which proceeded from the diseased mind of Henrik Ibsen. And if the reader is half as sick of the whole subject of his plays as I am, he must be indeed rejoiced to come to the end of this chapter!

II.

AMERICAN ACTORS ABROAD, AND HOW THEY "FAIL" THERE.

*Sometimes a little cloud you can espy,
With many stars around it, in the sky;
I am that little cloud upon the Stage:
All theatres and all actors I engage,
And, having hired them all, I wax in pelf;
My Theatre is a shop and runs itself!*

—MR. CHARLES FROHMAN'S *Parable, Versified.*

A REPRESENTATIVE speculator in "theatrical goods," Mr. Charles Frohman, returning to New York, from England, supplemented his customary newspaper proclamation of his alleged business plans,—the presentation of plays aboard ocean steamships, the touring of America with portable theatres, the establishment of repertory playhouses on the East Side of New York City, and so forth,—with a somewhat amusing assurance, which the complaisant press circulated and which the credulous public was expected to credit. "After many years of labor," he said, "*I* have actually got them to accept American actors abroad." Mr. Frohman's view of his vocation and likewise of himself has been declared by him, in words of which the meaning can-

not be mistaken: those words are, "I keep a Department Store" and "The Best in the Theatre means ME!" This tradesman's notion, however, that the acceptance of American actors abroad is due to his "labor" or to any conciliatory, persuasive, or industrial influence exerted by him is comically erroneous, in view of the facts which are of record relative to this subject, and also it is impudent. Decisive professional successes were gained by American actors, not only in England, but in other countries of Europe, long before the birth of Mr. Frohman, and, although it is true that the English, in general, prefer their own artists, in every branch of art, American actors deserving of acceptance, by reason of unique or exceptional ability and character, have obtained it in that country, any time within a hundred years.

Mr. Frohman is a clever man of business and his career has been industrious in commercial speculation, various, picturesque, and fortunate. He is a native of Sandusky, Ohio, born June 17, 1860. His important theatrical enterprise began in 1888, when he acquired control of the late Bronson Howard's striking and popular war drama of "Shenandoah,"—a play that proved abundantly remunerative. Since that time he has dealt largely in plays and still more largely in actors, both English and American, and many of his trade ventures, especially of late years, have been very profitable. He has established a fine theatre, the Empire, in New

was much followed and warmly admired there, equally by the press and the public. He was only twenty-seven years old when he made his first foreign venture, and he had then been only a short time on the stage, but he had gained signal success in the impersonation of dialect parts, "Yankee" and French, had made a brilliant hit by his performance of one of the *Dromios*,—in association with the popular and famous John Barnes,—and had appeared as *Falstaff*, in which part he subsequently became eminent and eclipsed all rivalry. In London he acted at the Surrey Theatre and also at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. His imitations of the elder Mathews, Edmund Kean, and other notable actors of the time were accounted extraordinarily truthful and fine and were greatly admired. His *Falstaff* was accepted by the English critics with even greater warmth of commendation than had been evinced by his critical admirers at home. He was the fourth of the eight successive notable representatives of *Rip Van Winkle*, and until the rise of Jefferson, who was the eighth in that character, he held absolute preference as the best. His acting of *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, in Macklin's comedy of "The Man of the World," is remembered as wonderfully expositive alike of Scotch peculiarities and the selfish craft of which human nature is capable. Hackett was an actor of extraordinary ability, and as such he obtained the amplest recognition in England as well as in America.

Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), a man of extraordinary ability, touched with genius, was one of the most remarkable actors of whom there is any record. He made his first regular professional appearance in 1820, when yet the Republic was in its infancy; he was one of the earliest of American actors to venture on the London Stage, and it was with reference to him that the cry first gained currency that actors from America always fail in England, because always unappreciated and unfairly treated there.

Forrest made two professional visits to that country, and was heartily welcomed. His acting, indeed, was not admired by everybody: no acting has ever yet met with universal approbation: but, relatively, Forrest was as well received in England as Salvini, at a later time, was received in America, and London honored him far more than New York, in our day, has honored, for example, John Hare or Edward Terry,—two of the most accomplished impersonators that have appeared on our Stage. Greed of admiration, however, is, in some cases, insatiate. Forrest, although he obtained great fame and ample fortune, was never satisfied with the recognition that he had received, and Forrest's admirers, to this day, are enraged, precisely as he was, at even the least dissent from the estimate which would rank him as the greatest of actors. At the height of his popularity, when he was performing at the old Broadway Theatre, being incensed by the publi-

cation of certain strictures from the pen of Mr. William Stuart, he said to his business agent and devoted follower, Joseph McArdle: "Why don't you kill him? ——— him! Throw him over the gallery rail!" No doubt, in that case, he had cause for anger, since the strictures were wantonly hostile and malicious, but, unhappily for his peace, advancement, and reputation, ferocious resentment of adverse opinion was chronic with him, arising out of the overweening egotism which predominated in his character.

Within distinct limitations Forrest was a great actor, nor was that fact ever seriously disputed by any considerable authority, but neither he nor his followers could tolerate any qualification of encomium. Adversity of criticism meant "conspiracy to ruin." That, invariably, was Forrest's view of the matter. He was incapable of comprehending that there could be any ground of reasonable dissent from his ideals of character or his histrionic style. The newspaper opposition, such as it was, that he encountered when acting in London he promptly attributed to a hostile influence, privately exercised by the tragedian Macready. He rose in a box at a theatre in Edinburgh and loudly hissed Macready's performance of *Hamlet*, and when Macready came to act in New York his course of conduct indirectly led to the terrible Astor Place riots, in 1849, in which twenty-two persons were killed and many others injured. Yet Forrest's English experience

was such as ought to have satisfied rational desire and expectation.

"The London Chronicle," for example, of October 17, 1836, recorded his first appearance in that capital, saying that it was made

"Before one of the most crowded audiences ever assembled in any theatre, and elicited those enthusiastic testimonials of success which have stamped him *one of the greatest actors that ever graced the English Stage*. . . . On his entrée *the whole house rose and gave him three times three*. . . . His reception was more flattering than his most sanguine friends could have anticipated. . . ."

The exigent "Athenæum" greeted Forrest's performance of *Othello* as *superior* to that of Edmund Kean, which had been deemed perfection, and was still fresh in public remembrance, Kean having then been only three years dead. Later, in 1845, the usually caustic, censorious Douglas Jerrold, descanting on Forrest's impersonation of *King Lear*, enthusiastically testified:

"A more truthful, feeling, and artistic display of genuine acting we have never witnessed. . . . Mr. Forrest has stamped himself as a man of genius. We candidly confess we did not think it was in him, and we were much electrified, as was every one in the house. . . . His *Lear* is equal, in every respect, to that of the two mighty tragedians [John Philip Kemble and Edmund Kean] whose names are hallowed by the admirers of genius. We think we can scarcely bestow higher praise."

Extraordinary success was gained in London by "Jim Crow Rice,"—as he was generally called. Thomas D.

Rice (1806-1860) was a native of New York, from which place, in his youth, he migrated to the West. At twenty he was employed by N. M. Ludlow, as assistant prompter, at a theatre in Mobile, and there his professional experience began. He attracted notice by acting *Wormwood*, in J. B. Buckstone's farce of "The Lottery Ticket," and *Old Delf*, in the farce of "Family Jars." His *Wormwood* was said, by Ludlow, to be an imitation of the versatile James B. Roberts in that part, and his *Delf* an imitation of the famous comedian John Barnes, who had made a special hit in it. Later he acted at Louisville, still under Ludlow's management, and there he first essayed the negro character in which, subsequently, he gained fame and fortune. He had seen an old negro slave, the property of a stable-keeper in that city, named Crow. The negro had adopted that name. He was old and deformed, his deformity causing him to limp, in a ludicrous manner, as he walked, and he was accustomed to croon a sort of melody and "set his heel a-rockin'" with this refrain:

"Wheel about, turn about, do jes' so,
And ebery time I wheel about I jump Jim Crow!"

Rice conceived the idea of making that character the basis of a performance new to the stage. He wrote words for singing, elaborated the dance, "made up" on the model of the old slave, and, appearing before a Louisville audience, made a prodigious hit. After

his first performance of *Jim Crow* he was recalled to the stage twenty times. He subsequently visited many American cities, winning applause wherever he appeared, and eventually he went to London, where he earned a fortune. He was a convivial man, and not less eccentric than convivial. It pleased him to wear gold pieces,—sovereigns and the like,—as buttons on his garments, and not infrequently the boon companions into whose hands he fell would stupefy him with liquor and then rob him of those ornaments. His popularity was very great. He was not simply an entertainer; he was an artist. He wrote several plays, among them a “Travesty of Othello” and a musical burlesque called “Bone Squash.” His example prompted the establishment of Negro Minstrelsy in London. He married, in that city, a daughter of Gladstone, manager of the old Surrey Theatre. His death occurred in New York, in 1860. The first appearance of the great comedian the late Joseph Jefferson was made in association with Rice, who, at Washington, in 1833, Jefferson being then only four years old, carried him on in a sack and dumped him on the stage, as a negro boy, “made up” in exact imitation of himself, at the same time singing this couplet,

“Ladies and gem’men, I’d have you for to know,
I’s e got a little darkey here, to jump Jim Crow!”

Charlotte Cushman, among tragic performers the greatest actress that America has produced, made a

professional visit to England in 1844. She had been on the stage about eight years, having begun her dramatic career in 1835, at New Orleans, as *Lady Macbeth* (she had previously, in that year, appeared as a singer, beginning in "Almaviva"), but, although she had worked hard and gained ample professional proficiency, she had not obtained recognition commensurate with her desert, and, although she had lived very frugally, her savings, after that long period of labor, did not exceed five hundred dollars. With that small capital she nevertheless determined to make a daring venture in a foreign land. She possessed, however, other and better resources than that of money. She was a woman of genius, massive character, and resolute, indomitable will. She did not present herself in London as a suppliant; she demanded opportunity as a competent artist. The opportunity was not at once conceded: she was obliged to wait,—to endure solicitude through a period of suspense that might well have subdued a less valourous spirit; but an opening came at last, and she appeared, February 14, 1845, as *Bianca*, in Dean Milman's tragedy of "Fazio." The performance was decisive, the success prodigious. Eighteen days later, writing to her mother, she recorded, in this expressive sentence, the result of her venture, "*All my successes put together since I have been upon the stage would not come near my success in London.*" One newspaper, "The Sun," declared, "Since the memo-

nable appearance of Edmund Kean, in 1814, never has there been such a *début* on the boards of an English theatre."

Miss Cushman, acting first as *Emilia* and then as *Lady Macbeth*, had co-operated with Forrest, and had to such extent diverted immediate public attention from the popular tragedian, then on his second visit to the British capital, that he conceived a bitter dislike for her, which lasted all his life: he would never afterward set foot on the same stage with her. She acted also *Rosalind*, *Beatrice*, *Portia*, *Mrs. Haller*, *Meg Merrilies*, *Lady Teazle*, and *Julia*—in "The Hunchback"—and she produced "Romeo and Juliet," acting *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of her sister Susan, and making a brilliant impression. That performance was given 250 times, in one season, 1845-'46, in London and other cities. In Dublin she acted *Viola*. Her stay in Great Britain lasted five years, and when she returned to America, in 1849, she was welcomed with all the honors that could be paid to a queen of the stage. But—she had left home with a mere pittance: she came back with a fortune, and with the laurel of eminent and undying renown which, till then, had been withheld, in her own land.

James B. Roberts was another of the American actors who were hospitably received on the English Stage. Mr. Roberts went to London in 1857 and appeared at Drury Lane, September 21, as *Sir Giles Overreach*,

subsequently making a prosperous tour of many cities of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Edwin Booth, distinctively a *tragedian*, and as such the greatest of his day, was, beyond question, a representative American actor, and remembrance of the reception which was accorded to him in England should, by itself, be sufficient to dispel the mistaken idea that the English public has been hostile to American actors. Edwin Booth, on the occasion of his first professional visit to England, made in 1861, appeared at the Haymarket Theatre, London, first as *Shylock*, later as *Sir Giles Overreach*, and lastly as *Richelieu*. At the beginning of his engagement the press was frigid, but the public welcomed and cheered him. At the close his performance of *Richelieu*, not in our time equalled, caused great enthusiasm. After acting in London he appeared in Liverpool and Manchester, and it is interesting to remember that in the latter city he met for the first time Henry Irving, who was a member of a stock-company there, and who acted with him in several plays, one of which was "Hamlet." The cloud caused by the American Civil War was dark over the world at that time, and "Yankees" were not generally popular in England; for which reason Booth was not encouraged to prolong his tour. His second professional visit to England was made nearly twenty years later, when he appeared, November 6, 1880, at the Princess' Theatre, London, as *Hamlet*. I had

used the privilege of an old and intimate friend, earnestly advising him to begin his London season in the character of *Richelieu*, but unhappily he listened to the injudicious counsel of his wife (Mary McVicker), an impulsive, belligerent lady, who meant well but possessed no tact, and, by choosing *Hamlet*, he made the needless and hurtful mistake of challenging comparison with the reigning favorite of the English Stage. Henry Irving had given two hundred consecutive representations of *Hamlet* and had established a prodigious renown in that character, and no actor, even though an angel from heaven, would, at that time, have been accepted as his rival in it. Booth subsequently told me that, being informed of a hostile element in the theatre, and stimulated to resent and brave it, he was in no fit mood for acting *Hamlet*, and that his first London performance of the part was metallic and inflexible and, to himself, one of the most unsatisfactory that he ever gave. It was coldly received, but presentations of *Richelieu*, *Iago*, *Bertuccio*, and *King Lear*, given later, evoked abundant sympathy and ample recognition. His engagement at the Princess' Theatre continued for one hundred and nineteen nights. Then came one of the most interesting incidents in theatrical history. Booth formed the plan of giving a series of afternoon performances, and he expressed to Irving the wish to give those performances at the Lyceum Theatre. Irving assented, but later suggested that a production

should be effected of the tragedy of "Othello," in which both of them could participate, alternating the characters of *Othello* and *Iago*. Booth cordially concurred in this project and on May 2, 1881, "Othello" was performed at the Lyceum, Booth appearing as the *Moor*, Irving, for the first time on any stage, as *Iago*, and Ellen Terry as *Desdemona*. The representation was accounted exceptionally fine. The two chieftains were deemed about equal in excellence. When, however, they exchanged characters and Irving acted *Othello* to the *Iago* of Booth, the dominance of the American actor was generally conceded,—not that his *Iago* was thought to surpass that of Irving, but that Irving's *Othello*, compared with Booth's, was thought to be ineffective. The Lyceum engagement of Booth lasted four weeks. The business was extraordinary,—the prices being raised, in the balcony, from five to ten shillings, in the stalls from ten and six to one guinea, the boxes from one guinea to five, and all the reserved seats in the theatre being sold before the engagement began. The occasion was one of the greatest public enthusiasm and of memorable interest.

On the German Stage Edwin Booth's success was prodigious. He appeared January 11, 1883, at the Residenz Theater, Berlin, and afterward acted in Hamburg, Bremen, Hanover, Leipsic, and Vienna, and in each of those cities he had a royal welcome. At the close of his engagement in Berlin the German actors

with whom he had been associated presented him with a crown of silver laurel leaves, inscribed, "To the unrivalled artist, Edwin Booth." At Hamburg the Director and Members of the Company of the Thalia gave him a spray of silver laurel leaves. At Bremen his German associates gave him another crown of silver laurel leaves, inscribed, "To the Great Artist, Edwin Booth." At Leipsic the members of the company gave him a wreath of laurel in silver. On each occasion the presentation was made with an address of warm congratulation. Immediately after his first performance in Berlin Booth wrote to me the following letter, which provides an instructive commentary on the notion that "acceptance" of American actors abroad has only lately been accorded:

"MY DEAR WILL:—I have just accomplished the one great object of my professional aspiration. 'Tis after one o'clock and I am very weary, but cannot go to bed without a line to you. . . . O, I wish you had been present to-night! When I am cooler I will try to give you a full account of the night's work. The actors as well as the audience were very enthusiastic, many of them kissing my hands and thanking me over and over again,—for what I know not, unless it was because they recognized in me a sincere disciple of their idol Shakespeare. . . . Well, this is the realization of my twenty years' dream. What shall I do now? Act in Italy and France? No. . . . Good-night. God bless you.

EDWIN."

Throughout his German tour, although he played at the terrible disadvantage of speaking in English, while

his associates spoke in German, Booth attracted and delighted great crowds, and he was warmly extolled in the press. At the end of his tour he was invited and urged to act in Italy, Spain, France, and Russia, but he declined,—preferring to return home. Great as Booth's hold was upon the hearts of his countrymen, he never was more entirely "accepted" than by the public of Germany.

The great success in Great Britain gained by Mary Anderson has not been forgotten. That remarkable actress made her first appearance in London, in 1883, at the Lyceum Theatre, acting *Parthenia*, in the old play of "Ingomar," by Mrs. Lovell, and subsequently she appeared as *Galatea* and as *Juliet*. No performer could have wished for a warmer welcome than was extended to her by the British public and press, or for more generous favor than that which steadily followed her performances, wherever she appeared. Her impersonation of *Juliet* was accepted in London with heartiest approbation, notwithstanding the fact that the great and exceedingly popular actress Ellen Terry had, only a year before, been acclaimed superb in the same character. Three of Miss Anderson's most brilliant performances were shown in England before they were shown in America, and they proved to be three of her most decided and financially remunerative successes,—those, namely, of *Rosalind*, in "As You Like It," given at Stratford-upon-Avon, August 29, 1884, and *Hermione*

and *Perdita*, in "The Winter's Tale," given at Nottingham, April 23, 1887. At the London Lyceum she subsequently acted in "The Winter's Tale" from September 10, 1887, to March 24, 1888, giving one hundred and sixty-six consecutive performances—a longer run than that comedy had ever enjoyed before or has ever enjoyed since.

Another signal success of American theatrical adventure in Great Britain was achieved by Ada Rehan. Augustin Daly presented that brilliant actress in London, for the first time, long before Mr. Frohman had entered the vocation of theatrical management. Miss Rehan appeared, July 19, 1884, at Toole's Theatre, and she acted there for several weeks, but the engagement was not entirely successful. Daly, although dissatisfied, was not discouraged. On May 27, 1886, he again brought out Miss Rehan in London, and she played at the Strand for nine weeks. On May 3, 1888, she appeared at the Gaiety Theatre, in "The Railroad of Love," and on May 29, that year, for the first time in Great Britain, she acted at that theatre as *Katharine*, in "The Taming of the Shrew." Her splendid performance of that part and Daly's brilliant production of that play made their victory complete. The play ran until July 31, and on August 3 Miss Rehan acted at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, at Stratford, as *Katharine*.

Daly's aspiring mind was not yet satisfied. He

took Miss Rehan and his company to Edinburgh and thence to Glasgow, where they were received with enthusiasm,—even the austere Edinburgh “Scotsman” declaring that the performance “disarms criticism, on account of its excellence and variety.”

Daly next ventured on the Continent, and there he was rewarded with abundant prosperity. In Paris the lack of appreciation that Mr. Frohman intimated had been shown toward American actors abroad was expressed by crowded and enthusiastic recognition in the press. De la Pommeroye said:

“That which strikes us above all, especially in Miss Rehan, is the very visible preoccupation: *the American artists give the spectator absolutely the illusion of reality. In this respect the comedians of Mr. Daly go very much further than our French artists.*”

In Hamburg and Berlin the welcome accorded to the American actors was equally cordial, and the success of Daly’s venture was decisive. The intrepid manager, however, was not content, although he had established his company of American artists as a recognized institution in London. On June 10, 1890, he presented Miss Rehan and her associates in that capital in “As You Like It,” and the beautiful comedy ran continuously for ten weeks at the Lyceum Theatre. He then determined to have a theatre of his own in England. On October 30, 1891, the cornerstone of it was laid, by Miss Rehan, and, on June 27, 1893,

after having met and overcome many difficulties, he opened Daly's Theatre, Leicester Square,—Miss Rehan appearing first as *Katharine* and then,—winning a remarkable triumph,—as *Viola*. “*Twelfth Night*” had one hundred and eleven consecutive performances, and during the same engagement, besides successful presentations of other plays, more than fifty performances were given of “*The School for Scandal*.”

Daly did not again present Miss Rehan at his London theatre, because it was occupied, almost without cessation, by other ventures, in which he was a partner, and which were so successful that he did not choose to disturb them; but he presented her and his company in London, in 1896, and in 1897 they made a triumphant tour, beginning at Stratford-upon-Avon, with an open-air performance of “*As You Like It*,” and visiting, in succession, Newcastle, Nottingham, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Liverpool, and Manchester.

When Daly died, in 1899, the most valuable part of his estate proved to be his London theatre, and when finally that estate was settled the share of profits of Daly's Theatre, London, subsequent to 1897, awarded to his heirs, exceeded a quarter of a million dollars. It should be remarked, furthermore, that Daly's Theatre was not a pretentious “repertory theatre” and that it did not fail, leaving a burden of debt to be borne by a confiding silent partner, as hap-

pened in another case, when another American theatrical manager opened a theatre there. It was a legitimate theatrical institution, built and maintained by the indomitable courage, enterprise, sagacity, and money of one of the ablest and most accomplished theatrical managers America has produced.

Anna Cora Mowatt and Edward Loomis Davenport made their first appearance in England, in 1847, at Manchester, acting in "The Lady of Lyons." Mrs. Mowatt had been on the stage for only two years, Davenport for eleven. The latter was comparatively a veteran. After their first performance at Manchester had ended the manager of the theatre there, old Knowles, addressed himself to Davenport, saying, "*You* are the star, not Mrs. Mowatt, and your name shall stand first," and, accordingly, the change was made by the manager's order. That incident the actor himself, many years ago, related to me. The English venture of those American actors, after they had surmounted the obstacle of a frigid reception in London, proved fortunate in every respect. Mrs. Mowatt's plays of "Fashion" and "Armand" were produced in London, and she became very popular, both there and in the provinces, as "the American lily." Davenport won his way to signal distinction, acting, among other parts, *Iago*, *Mercutio*, *Benedick*, *Orlando*, *Valentine*, *Velasco*, *Virginius*, *Ingomar*, and *William* (in "Black-ey'd Susan"). He was a great actor, and the scope of a

volume would be required in which to do justice to his versatile abilities and extraordinary achievement. Mrs. Mowatt remained in England till 1851, Davenport till 1853.

The successes of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence were obtained in the representation of Irish and Yankee characters. Williams was the best representative of the Irish peasant lad that old playgoers had seen since the time of the elder John Drew, and Florence could express essentially Irish humor and pathos in a way to make his auditors smile through their tears. Mrs. Williams was perfection as the bouncing "Yankee Gal," and Mrs. Florence possessed an exuberance of sparkling mirth which the multitude found irresistible. Mr. and Mrs. Watkins acted in melodrama and comedy, and they were popular in Great Britain during all the time of their stay there, 1860 to 1863.

Two notable American theatrical ventures in England that missed a substantial reward were those of Lawrence Barrett, in 1881, and Richard Mansfield, in 1888-'89, but not in either case was the lack of monetary remuneration attributable to public antipathy. Barrett was unlucky in appearing at the London Lyceum soon after a death in the royal family,—that of the Duke of Albany,—had caused a season of mourning, during which the routine of business was disturbed and theatre-going was, in a considerable measure, discontinued. The

acting of Barrett, meanwhile, was much admired. He played *Yorick* and *Cardinal Richelieu*. His engagement was brief, though exactly filling the time originally engaged. Henry Irving, returning from America, succeeded him at the Lyceum Theatre, reviving his splendid production of "Much Ado About Nothing." Barrett was present as a spectator, on the opening night, and when he was seen, in one of the stage boxes, the great audience,—Irving's own particular audience, assembled to do honor to its idol,—rose and cheered the American actor with vociferous enthusiasm, until he was compelled to come forward and bow in acknowledgment of the public greeting. Mansfield was unlucky in the choice that he made of plays in which to win his English auditory. He began with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and he supplemented that horror with the hateful "A Parisian Romance." Neither was liked, though Mansfield's acting in both was recognized as original and powerful. His later performance of *Prince Karl* was heartily relished, and he might have continued playing that part in London for many weeks. He chose to produce "King Richard III.," a play which, though produced by scores of actors, has never, except in one instance, been continuously prosperous for any considerable period,—and in producing it, with imperial magnificence, he squandered a fortune. His genius and his artistic success, all the same, were amply recognized in England,—more amply and much more

quickly, when he played *Richard*, than in America, which was his home. In Boston his presentment of it was chilled with an immediate frost, and when, in November, 1889, he had acted in Philadelphia, he wrote to me, "The Philadelphians are very indifferent and don't care a damn about this fine presentment of Shakespeare's tragedy."

William Gillette and his American company, acting in "Secret Service" and in "Sherlock Holmes," were very warmly received in London; Miss Grace George made "a palpable hit" there, acting in "Divorçons"; and if Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe did not win an opulent success, it was only because their venture was cruelly mismanaged. Miss Marlowe is one of the loveliest of romantic actors, and, within her proper field, the peer of any woman now in professional life. Mr. Sothern is an exceptionally good comedian and an accomplished "all round" actor,—a good *Hamlet*, an admirable *Benedick*, and, with one exception, Henry Irving, the best *Malvolio* that has been seen within half a century. Those actors should have won golden reward in England, and they would have done so if their advent had not been clouded by such advertising as is serviceable only to a three-ring circus or a new brand of pickles. By some competent judges who saw them their acting was warmly extolled, but their London engagement was short, and they did not have sufficient time in which to overcome the aversion which a coarse

and singularly inappropriate style of proclamation had inspired.

The failure of American actors on the British Stage, when they do fail there, is, almost invariably, attributable to one final, decisive, and sufficient cause,—namely, inadequate acting in an unattractive play. It should always be borne in mind, by aspirants who seek for laurel and lucre in foreign lands, that old communities, with centuries of production in all the arts behind them, possess established traditions which they do not lightly discard, and that, having seen more than can have been seen by communities of modern origin, they are less easily aroused, less prone to emotion, and far less ready to be surprised into pleasure or to express gratification. There is, in particular, a kind of inertia of reticence in the intellectual class of an English audience; the actor is expected to prove his case: but when he does prove it, as many American actors have done, he finds himself taken to the English heart,—“not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,” and when once he is so taken he is kept there.

III.

THE THEATRE AND THE PULPIT.

THE old intolerance toward the Stage has, of late years, somewhat abated: indeed, ever since the time when the Rev. Dr. Bellows, standing in his pulpit, spoke so eloquently and fervently in defence of the dramatic profession an influence has been slowly operant in the religious community favorable to a just and kindly view of the Theatre: yet the spirit of bigotry has not been extinguished. It still, from time to time, makes itself manifest in denunciatory sermons, and actors are still occasionally made to feel that they are regarded, by a considerable number of persons, as the followers of a disreputable profession.

The proposition is incontestable that Society is, to a large extent, corrupt, and that the spirit of our age is materialistic, sensual, and pagan. Censors of the social order have good ground for their censure, and those of them who, when rebuking the evil forces and deploring the wrong proclivities of the day, include a perverted Theatre in their condemnation are entirely justified by the facts which they perceive and declare. On the other hand, censors who assail the Theatre as an

institution and the Dramatic Profession as a class, alleging that the Stage is intrinsically injurious and its professors necessarily immoral, assume a position untenable in the light of truth and wantonly, flagrantly, insolently unjust. There are persons, however, who assume that position and habitually make those slanderous charges, and many among them are members of the "Christian" Clergy, ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who, considering their profession, might reasonably be expected to abhor the crime of bearing false witness against their fellow creatures. It has pleased certain persons of that class, including self-righteous clergymen, to select articles in the press written by me, condemnatory of the *misuse of the Theatre* by bad men, and use them as a justification for citing and quoting me as an enemy to the Stage and to the Actor. That is a wicked injustice. The following letter, which I wrote in consequence of that gross misrepresentation, contains an explicit statement of my views on the subject, and I reproduce it here, as an act of justice to myself, from "The New York Tribune" of March 15, 1907:

"To the Editor of 'The Tribune':

"Sir:—I learn from an editorial comment in 'The New York Dramatic Mirror'—the leading dramatic paper of our country, and, therefore, an authority to be trusted—that the Rev. Mr. Snowden, a clergyman of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, has been misquoting and misusing words of mine as a support and justifica-

tion of an attack that he is making upon the Theatre as an institution, and that he cites me as an enemy of the Stage.

"I do not know what words of mine have been quoted by that ecclesiastic, or in what way they have been distorted and misapplied. I *do* know, and I wish explicitly to say, that any representation of me as an enemy or opponent of the Theatre, or as anything other than a believer in it and a devoted friend of it, is an impudent calumny. Against *abuses of the Theatre* by unworthy persons who, from time to time, have obtained control of it I have always contended. The institution itself has always received from me all the support that I could possibly give.

"The Mirror,'—with a mild forbearance that does not supply the requisite energy of repudiation of this pulpit libel,—relates that 'for nearly half a century' I have been writing about the Theatre and have 'published many books embodying graceful tributes to it and to its people.' The *whole* truth is that I have been, professionally, and in continuous, active employment, a writer about the Theatre for more than fifty years; that I am the oldest dramatic reviewer, in this country, in continuous service of the press as such; that I have been the Dramatic Editor and Critic of 'The New York Tribune' for forty-two years,—come July 13, 1907; that I have passed the whole of my life in intimate relations with the Theatre and in laborious support of it; that I have used my utmost ability and industry to sustain and advance it, and that now, at more than three-score-and-ten, I am still its earnest advocate and still in devoted service of it. My writings about the Drama already fill more than fifty huge folio volumes. And, although I have strenuously opposed and attacked every misuse of the Theatre that I have observed, the sum total of my testimony is wholly and fervently in favor of the Theatre and the Dramatic Profession.

"No man could give ampler or more practical proof than I have given of devotion to the Stage. My wife was, in her youth, an actress of distinction, professionally associated with the dramatic companies of Edwin Booth, James H. Hackett, John

Brougham, Lester Wallack, and Augustin Daly. My eldest son, Percy, has been an actor for nearly thirty years. My second son, Arthur,—who manifested extraordinary talent for the Stage,—would have been an actor, had he lived. My third son, Louis, was associated with theatrical management, and he would have continued in that pursuit, but for the fatal illness that caused his untimely death. My youngest son, Jefferson, is an actor now, and has been in that profession for more than twelve years; while his wife (Elsie Leslie) has been an actress from her childhood. My dearest and most intimate friends, with a few exceptions, have been actors. Any person, whether in the Pulpit or out of it, who designates *me* as an enemy of the Stage is either an ignoramus, a fool, or a malicious liar.

“I have become extremely weary of the babble of clergymen about the Theatre. As a rule, they know nothing whatever about it; and since they talk from the pulpit, where they are shielded from immediate reply, they can always safely indulge in the utterance of blather; and some of them are always improving the opportunity. One of them, not long ago, being distressed because of somebody’s silly proposition to name a playhouse after William Penn, recently cited and of course misapplied words of mine, from ‘The Tribune,’ thinking to strengthen his protest against the association of Penn’s name with the Stage by representing *me* as a foe of the Drama. They cannot, it seems, get along without dragging *Sir Lucius* into the quarrel. For my part, if what is said in Macaulay’s History about William Penn is true,—and, after careful consideration, I believe that it *is*,—I think that the disgrace would fall not on the name of Penn, but on the theatre that should happen to be tagged with it.

“I believe the Theatre, as an institution, to be intrinsically as powerful for good as the Church is; and I know that it is far more interesting. I believe that the members of the Dramatic Profession, as a class, are as moral and as respectable as the members of the Clergy. I believe that the Theatre, with all its faults, which are due to bad management and bad public in-

fluence—to evil propensities that are in human nature—is of great benefit to Society, and that, rightly administered, it is a blessing to civilization. I also think that Lord Clarendon was right when he expressed the opinion that clergymen, as a class, in their meddlesome interference with public affairs, are the most mischievous persons in the world. Yours truly,

“WILLIAM WINTER.”

“No. 17 Third Avenue, New Brighton,

“Staten Island, N. Y.,

“March 14, 1907.”

It is only natural that those who set themselves up as the moral instructors and guides of their fellow creatures, and in the security of the pulpit, under the sheltering sanction of an assumed celestial mandate, select as a special subject of their censure the institution of the Theatre, should sometimes find themselves, as sometimes they do, directly antagonized, and should ascertain that, as Daniel Webster once said, “There are blows to take as well as blows to give.” The denunciatory deliverances of the Clergy long ago roused the resentment of actors, and that resentment has shown itself in many plays, ranging all the way from the old “King John” to “Tartuffe” and “The Non-Juror” and so on to “Wild Oats.” It has shown itself, likewise, in another and bitter way, namely in the compilation of the crimes of clergymen,—crimes which, as a matter of fact, have far exceeded, alike in number and enormity, all the offences ever attributed to actors by even their most determined foes.

Fifty-two years ago William Pleater Davidge (1814-1888), one of the most honest and sturdy of men, published his pamphlet called "The Drama Defended." Davidge had made an extensive and accurate collection of accounts of clerical immorality, ranging over many years, and a very terrible chronicle it was. The late Stuart Robson also compiled statistics on the subject, voluminous and damnatory. Thoughtful persons, actors as well as others, have naturally been reminded, with irresistible force, that there are no pages in history blacker than those which record ecclesiastical offences, and that many of the most dreadful and harrowing crimes ever committed have proceeded from ecclesiastical bigotry and been done in the name of the Prince of Peace. The weakness and vice, for example, of a Gwynn, an Abington, or a Robinson,—incidents of a frail humanity and a vicious time, and surely as stimulative of pity as of censure,—pale into insignificance in comparison with the wickedness of a Colonna or a Borgia. Mention of such ancient examples is pertinent to this subject, but it is by no means needful to revert to remote times, or even to the comparatively modern time of Bishop Wainwright, to find proof that the Pulpit is in no position to vaunt itself as a censor of the Stage,—distinguishing that institution from itself and from the rest of Society.

In view of the disingenuous attempts of clergymen to use my writings in support of their unjust, unchris-

tian, and injurious aspersions of the Theatre and the Dramatic Profession, and of many fulminations from the Pulpit against actors and acting, I was impelled to examine the motive of this clerical antagonism, and my conclusion is that hostility of the Clergy toward the Theatre (not so frequent or, usually, so acrid as it was, yet sufficiently lively to be disgraceful) springs, primarily, from professional jealousy. The actor is more popular than the preacher, and the Stage, as against the Pulpit, carries the public favor and practical support. It is, however, also to be observed that the Press, not only by the exceptional and undue prominence which it gives to actual misconduct by people of the Stage, but by its indiscriminating and sometimes shamefully unjust treatment of them,—meaning its custom of parading any disgraceful conduct of any hanger-on of the Theatre as that of an “actor” or an “actress,”—stimulates the ready inclination of the Pulpit to assail the Stage, and furnishes the bigoted preacher with ammunition for his slander. In reflecting on this subject I was moved to conjecture (remembering what had been done in earlier times) what sort of a record of clerical misdeeds could be obtained by culling from current newspapers the reports of crimes committed by clergymen, in the course of a single year. It was not easy to make such a compilation, because while anything discreditable to anybody who can be called an “actor” or an “actress” is usually “played up”

in the newspapers, the records of clerical misbehavior are, usually, brief and often obscurely printed. A compilation was, however, made, covering a few months, and it will, perhaps, be found instructive. I merely quote the *substance* of the published statements, on the authority of the newspapers, without asserting, from my personal knowledge, that they are true. Many of them have the *prima facie* appearance of truth. My purpose in doing this (surely a good one) is, without malice, to show that the Pulpit, according to the testimony of the news despatches in the Press, is not entitled to condemn the Stage. An incident which particularly prompted me to make this record was the joint publication, a short time before I did so, in leading newspapers of New York, under the head of "Religious Notices," of the following paid advertisements:

"GO HEAR DR. HALDEMAN

First Baptist Church, Broadway and Seventy-ninth Street

Sunday Night, 8 o'clock, on

JESUS CHRIST EITHER ALMIGHTY

GOD OR BAD MAN

"A DENIAL

"It having been reported in the newspapers that Pastor Halde-
man, of the First Baptist Church, Broadway and Seventy-ninth
Street, recently attended a theatre, *he takes this occasion to deny*

it as an invention of Satan, and to say that he is against the Theatre as he is against all other like agencies of the Devil.

“(Signed) I. M. HALDEMAN, D.D.”

This pulpiteer, it will be observed, advertises himself as a Doctor of Divinity of the Baptist denomination. Not long ago another parson of the same creed, Rev. Clarence V. P. Richeson, of Boston, having made an innocent girl, scarcely more than a child, the victim of the most cruel, cowardly, contemptible betrayal that man can perpetrate on woman, deliberately murdered her with poison, in order that he might be free to contract a marriage with another woman, possessed of wealth and therefore preferred by him,—for which horrible crime he was lawfully put to death. It would be instructive to know whether I. N. Haldeman, D.D., attributes the crimes of his Christian brother to innate depravity of an individual or to the corrupting influence of Christianity and the pluvial creed to which both he and the late Richeson were addicted as “Christian” ministers. It would be as rational for him to hold the Church responsible for that murderer’s crimes as it would be for him to hold the Theatre responsible for misconduct on the part of any individual member of the dramatic profession.

On December 31, 1909, Rev. Robert Grant, of Waycross, Georgia, was expelled from the Presbyterian Church as “a falsifier,” unfit for the ministry. In

January, 1910, Rev. Arthur B. Stanley, Baptist minister, of Flat Rock, Michigan, deserted his wife and family and eloped with a woman employed by him as a stenographer. About the same time Rev. E. O. Tilden, Christian, deserted his wife and absconded, with \$300 which he had stolen from his church: when arrested, at Pasadena, California, he was found to be accompanied by a woman. A little later the press, in various parts of the country, recorded numerous cases of iniquity committed by clergymen. Record was made that Rev. H. J. Kiekhoefer, president of the religious school at Naperville, Illinois, had resigned his office after disclosure had been made of his misconduct with girls who were his pupils, intrusted to his care. Rev. Raymond E. Walker, late of the Graniteville Baptist Church, Centredale, Rhode Island, was placed in jail, in Providence, charged with having forged on a check the signature of a person who had been his friend and benefactor: Rev. Walker struggled to escape from the officers who had arrested him, and he was brought to Police Headquarters handcuffed. Rev. S. D. Turner, of Huntington, Arkansas, was placed in jail, charged with arson. Rev. John H. Carroll, a Roman Catholic priest, of Wallingford, Connecticut, was sued for libel. Rev. J. R. Rice, Evangelist, of Toledo, Ohio, was imprisoned on a charge of larceny from the person. Rev. Jordan Chavis, Chaplain of the Eighth Regiment of Illinois militia, was named as co-

respondent in a suit for divorce. Rev. A. M. Ritanour, Baptist minister, of ———, was “unfrocked” because of charges made against him by his wife, concerning his treatment of her daughter, aged thirteen, by her first husband: she alleged that he was responsible for the child’s death. Rev. H. H. Goodin, Baptist minister, of Pontiac, Illinois, was sentenced to serve from one to ten years in the penitentiary for abducting a girl, aged sixteen, for immoral purposes. Rev. Charles Wesley McCrosson was, by a lenient judge, in Los Angeles, California, allowed to make his choice between paying a fine of \$4,000 or serving a term of one year in prison, for participation in a mining swindle.

On January 5, 1910, Rev. J. C. Trapp shot, in the abdomen, Deputy Sheriff McAdams, of El Paso, Texas, who was endeavoring to serve him with a summons: the minister subsequently surrendered himself. On January 8, at Ottawa, Kansas, Rev. M. W. Stuckley, of Williamsburgh, that state, was found guilty of abducting, for immoral purposes, and for “white-slave purposes,” L——— S———, aged sixteen. Rev. Stuckley was sentenced to a long imprisonment. The child had been a member of Stuckley’s church and had worked on a newspaper of which he was an editor. When he eloped with her he deserted his wife and four children. On February 22 Rev. Watson W. Trantor, pastor of the First Methodist Church, of New Richmond, Ohio, was arrested, on a charge, made by his

brother, of having forged a check for \$6,000. On January 29 Rev. William J. Herre, of Bellevue, Pennsylvania, was sued by James Annable, of Rose Point, Lawrence County, that State, for recovery of \$5,000, value of land taken from him, as a consideration, "to insure his [Annable's] admittance into Heaven." In March Rev. Victor M. Patterson, of Waterloo, Iowa, having deserted his wife and infant child, removed to Brooklyn, New York, and there became betrothed to a worthy young woman, whom he was about to "marry," when her father discovered his rascality and compelled his departure. On March 21 Rev. William Long, a Methodist preacher, was sentenced to thirty days in the County Jail, at Monticello, New York, for having stolen money from "a bank," the property of a son of Rev. Charles Walker, of Narrowsburgh. That was an exceptionally deplorable case of villany, as the Rev. W. Long and his wife and family, when destitute and homeless, had been taken by the Rev. Mr. Walker into his own home, and cared for, and the Rev. Mr. Walker had raised, by subscription, a considerable sum of money, for their relief, and had delivered it to Long. It was shown that the theft was committed by Rev. Long, subsequent to that act of benevolence, during the night, while his benefactor was asleep. On April 21 Bishop Wesley J. Gaines, of Atlanta, Georgia, was arrested, in Camden, New Jersey, on a warrant issued by Justice Miller, of Jersey City, on complaint of Rev.

J. H. Morgan, of Bordentown, New Jersey, charged with having stolen \$150 from "the Superannuated Ministers' Fund." On April 27 Ludovico Ciletti, formerly a Roman Catholic priest, then a student preparing to officiate as a Presbyterian minister, fled from Princeton, New Jersey, charged with having committed numerous thefts. On May 9 Rev. J. H. Wilson, of the Lutheran Church of the Ascension, at Savannah, Georgia, was publicly horsewhipped by Mrs. ——— and her daughter for having seduced the daughter; the flagellation of the reverend culprit continued until stopped by the Secretary of the Church Council. On the evening of the same date the Church Council received, and had the astounding effrontery to accept, the resignation of the Rev. Wilson, who, of course, should have been first ignominiously expelled and then prosecuted. On May 14 Rev. Francis E. Bowser was arrested as "a fugitive from justice," and arraigned in the Adams Street Police Court, Brooklyn, where Magistrate Tighe held him in bond for \$1,000, as he had been indicted, in Jersey City, for bigamy. On May 23 Alphonse M. Consolazio, a Roman Catholic priest, representing that he had left the priesthood, married Miss Katherine Johann, aged sixteen years and one month, eloping with her to Atlantic City. He subsequently left the unfortunate girl, and the marriage was annulled. On May 28 P. J. Gibson, a well-known and widely respected business man, of South

St. Paul, Minnesota, shot and killed Father Walsh, a Roman Catholic priest of the parish of St. Augustine, in St. Paul, because of that priest's relations with Mrs. Gibson. On June 16 Rev. S. W. Tucker, pastor of the Church of Christians, Scuffletown, Virginia, "jumped his bail," of \$500, and disappeared. He had been arrested for prowling, at night, around a woman's house, and was under nine separate accusations of bigamy, seven of them made by women of Scuffletown, where he preached. On the same date Sheriff M. W. Trefethen, of Portland, Maine, acting under authority of a writ of *habeas corpus*, removed Mrs. Florence Whitaker and her four children, two of them girls, from the yacht Kingdom, on complaint of Nathan H. Harriman, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, that the women and children were being deprived of their liberty, and detained against their will, by a clergyman, Rev. Frank W. Sandford. On June 18 Rev. Robert Vanover and Rev. Isaac Perry fought a duel, with knives, in the Rock Creek Baptist Church, Whiteley County, Kentucky, the throat of Rev. Vanover being cut from ear to ear, so that he promptly died. Blaine Perry, brother of Rev. Isaac Perry, joined in the fight, at a critical moment, and held the head of Rev. Vanover bent backward while Rev. Perry slashed his victim's throat. The church was crowded, at the time of this peculiarly atrocious murder, the congregation having been convened to hear "serious charges against Vanover," described as one of

the most widely known clergymen of Kentucky. Later in June Mrs. Mary A. Lavender, who had brought an action, for slander, against Rev. E. D. Crawford, pastor of the Woodlawn Methodist Episcopal Church, of Chicago, was awarded damages, to the extent of \$4,000. On July 15 Rev. James R. Kaye, an inmate of a House of Correction in Illinois, to which he had been committed for the crime of counterfeiting, was pardoned by President Taft. About the same time record was made of the case of Rev. Jonah Samuel Sturdevant, convicted of bigamy and then serving a term of imprisonment in jail, at Baltimore. On August 21 Rev. A. Hauberich, pastor of the Evangelical Church of Miltonburgh, Ohio, a prominent minister in that State, was arrested on charges made by a former class-mate, and he confessed that he had stolen watches and chains from seventeen theological students and also various fobs, scarf-pins, and cuff-buttons from various women. On August 29 Rev. Robert Martin Matthews, pastor of the First Welsh Church, of Connellsville, Pennsylvania, was committed to jail for bigamy,—Mrs. Matthews having discovered that he had a wife and children, living in Wales. On August 27 Levont Martoogesian, an Armenian priest, was liberated from Sing Sing prison, where he had served for two and one-half years for having attempted to extort \$100,000 by threats of assassination. He was immediately arrested again, on charges of blackmail, extortion, and attempted robbery.

On September 5 Rev. Clyde Gow, pastor of the Lincoln County Methodist Church, South, near Plattsburgh, Missouri, was dismissed from his pastorate because of charges which had been made against him by Miss E———— G————, deceased, who died (1908) after a criminal operation. The Rev. Gow was sentenced to four years in the Penitentiary. On October 7 Rev. DeWitt Clinton Sharpe, of Schenectady, New York, was sentenced by Justice Van Kirke to three and one-half years' imprisonment in the penitentiary for the crime of abducting, for immoral purposes, a girl, Miss ———, aged fourteen. In eloping with that unfortunate girl Rev. Sharpe deserted his wife. A little later the case of Rev. Evan T. Evans, formerly of the Protestant Episcopal Mission Church of St. John, Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, N. Y., was revived. The Rev. Evans, in consequence of his scandalous misbehavior, had been "allowed to resign." He subsequently deserted his wife, and that unhappy woman committed suicide. Rev. Evans eloped with Miss ———, a young woman, of Sarnia, Ontario, where he was in charge of the parish of St. John. Miss ——— carried several thousand dollars, on her amatory expedition with the parson. After a little time she returned to her home, saying that she had been "married" to the Rev. Evans, at Niagara, taken to Cleveland, and there robbed of her money and then sent home. The poor girl pined away, in consequence of the ill treatment to which she

had been subjected, and three months later she died. Investigation of the proceedings of the Rev. Evans disclosed the facts of his having misled another girl, only sixteen years old, and her pitiful condition. Record was also made, in the press, of the case of Rev. Joseph T. Bradburn, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Spencer, New York, a pulpiteer who disappeared on September 4, under incriminating circumstances, and who turned up on September 23, confessing "after a hard day's work, being nervous and weary, I was tempted and I yielded." The notorious Jere Cooke case need only be mentioned. The list could be greatly extended.

It would be easy, in the light of chronicles of which this is but as an index, to visit wholesale condemnation on the Church, but it would be cruelly unjust and wicked to do so. The intrinsic beneficence of the institution itself is not and cannot be vitiated by the misdeeds of its unworthy representatives. The history of the Church is radiant with the shining names of good men who, in purity of heart, nobility of soul, and singleness of purpose, have devoted great talents to the service of religion and have borne the civilizing influences of Christianity to the uttermost ends of the earth. The remembrance of such a man as Channing is an everlasting blessing. The thought of such a man as Doctor Barnardo is an inspiration. There are, in all communities, ministers of religion, poorly paid, heavily burdened, careworn and anxious, who patiently and bravely

strive onward, seeking only to do good, to relieve suffering, to rescue the fallen, and to inculcate faith and hope, and this they do with no thought of personal recompense, other than the consciousness of duty honestly and earnestly fulfilled. Their integrity, their services, their influence, and their example are not to be scorned and vilified because weak or vicious or disease-afflicted men have dishonored the Pulpit. But, if justice and charity are due to the Church, surely also they are due to the Theatre. The history of the Theatre does not represent that institution as void of blemish, but it contains no such record of iniquity, in any period, as that which startles and shocks the reader of the history of the Church. The votaries of the Stage, as a class, are good men and women—representative of their time and society—engaged in the ministry of a beautiful art, which, when used as it ought to be, is pre-eminently inculcative of virtue and diffusive of happiness, and nothing could be more unjust and reprehensible than the outcry against them which so often proceeds from pulpit performers, clothed in self-righteousness and vainglorious in their impudent assumption of the right to prescribe and estimate the morals and regulate the conduct of mankind.

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